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DANTE AND SWEDENBORG

①
DANTE AND
SWEDENBORG

WITH OTHER ESSAYS ON THE
NEW RENAISSANCE

BY
FRANK SEWALL
AUTHOR OF "THE ETHICS OF SERVICE;" "THE NEW METAPHYSICS;
OR, THE LAW OF END, CAUSE AND EFFECT," ETC.

Ⓔ
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. SONNET—DANTE,	I
II. DANTE AND SWEDENBORG,	24
III. "THE SPIRITUAL SENSE OF DANTE"—A REVIEW,	60
IV. THE GREEK PHILOSOPHY IN ITS RELATION TO THE LORD'S FIRST ADVENT,	81
V. THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ITS RELATION TO THE LORD'S SECOND ADVENT, . . .	91
VI. THE NEW RENAISSANCE,	104
VII. FAUST IN MUSIC,	123
VIII. THE SECRET OF WAGNER,	144
IX. SONNET—THE ONE AND THE MANY, . . .	150
X. SONNET—GOOD FRIDAY IN ST. MUNGO'S, .	151
XI. SONNET—"ALL THAT DOTH PASS AWAY," .	152

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DANTE.

AH ! not as one who builds a world while dreaming,
And wakes to find his shadowy visions flee,
Oh, man of daring wing, thine eye did see
The things that are to mortal sense but seeming.
In the strange stuff of shadows palely gleaming
Take awful shapes the things men dread to know,
From hell's abyss to heaven's high roseate glow,
Marking the pathway of our soul's redeeming.

But now the night is past ; the sun is high.
Ghosts flee, and fancied action calls for deeds.
Whither then, Dante, is thy shade-world going ?

O wonder ! see its very substance glowing !
Glitter in sunshine all its dewy meads !
Its dismal cliffs stand black against the sky !

DANTE AND SWEDENBORG.

I.

DANTE has been read and re-read, translated and commented upon, now for five centuries. But has any one ever undertaken to discover how much of truth there is in Dante?

Perhaps the age for seeking the truth in anything is gone by? Rather, the scientist would be likely to say, it has never come, till now. For ages, it would seem as if the world had never seriously asked for the truth regarding the spiritual world, and that which must constitute by far the most important part of man's life and destiny. In Dante's own time, if we may judge from Boccaccio's comments on his life and his great poem, theology and poesy were regarded as occupying nearly the same rank in importance and in authority. Even the dogmatic assertions of the church respecting the unseen world were regarded with a kind of ceremonial respect, as if they belonged to a class of things more fictitious than real, sacred fictions, indeed, but still fictions, like the myths of old and the tales of the poets.

In the history of literature there have been produced works which, while not claiming to be

the utterances of revelation, have yet occupied a place of authority and influence resembling that which is accorded to the Divine oracles themselves. Such, for instance, was the whole system of the Platonic philosophy, but especially the doctrine concerning the spiritual and intellectual nature of man and the immortality of the soul. Such we may say has been the position allotted to the *Divina Commedia* of Dante, and perhaps, in less degree, to the *Paradise Lost* of Milton. While not accepted as Divine revelations on these hidden subjects, they have been regarded as a treasury of consecrated and hallowed fictions—descriptions which if not true are about as likely to be true as anything we can know on the subject, and as therefore good substitutes for the truth where no absolute or demonstrated truth is to be obtained on the subjects in question. So have grown up, as Swedenborg describes such phenomena in the world of spirits, a whole system of artificial heavens and hells and their hierarchies, having no immediate basis in anything revealed, and yet held in popular religious estimation as practically about as valid as revelation itself.

Says Milman in his *History of Latin Christianity*, Book xiv. ch. 2,—a passage quoted by Longfellow in the notes to his translation of the *Divina Commedia* :

“Throughout the Middle Ages the world after death continued to reveal more and more fully its awful secrets. Hell, Purgatory, Heaven became more distinct, if it may be so said, more visible. Their site, their topography,

their torments, their trials, their enjoyments, became more conceivable, almost more palpable to sense: till Dante summed up the whole of this traditional lore, or at least, with a Poet's intuitive sagacity, seized on all which was most imposing, effective, real, and condensed it in his three co-ordinate poems. That Hell had a local existence, that immaterial spirits suffered bodily and material torments, none, or scarcely one hardy speculative mind, presumed to doubt. . . .

"The mediæval Hell had gathered from all ages, all lands, all races, its imagery, its denizens, its site, its access, its commingling horrors; from the old Jewish traditions, perhaps from the regions beyond the sphere of the Old Testament; from the Pagan poets, with their black rivers, their Cerberus, their boatman and his crazy vessel; perhaps from the Teutonic Hela, through some of the early visions. Then came the great Poet, and reduced all this chaos to a kind of order, moulded it up with the cosmical notions of the times, and made it, as it were, one with the prevalent mundane system. Above all, he brought it to the very borders of our world; he made the life beyond the grave one with our present life; he mingled in close and intimate relation the present and the future. Hell, Purgatory, Heaven, were but an immediate expansion and extension of the present world. . . .

". . . Of that which Hell, Purgatory, Heaven, were in popular opinion during the Middle Ages, Dante was but the full, deep, concentrated expression; what he embodied in verse, all men believed, feared, hoped."

The actual validity of these speculations and their influence as touching the religious life of men must always depend, however, on the amount of supernatural authority ascribed to them or the amount of revelation recognized in them, and, therefore, first of all, on the amount and kind of truth recognized in

revelation itself. It is a question whether the Platonic philosophy, even its sublime doctrine of the soul's immortality, exerted a strictly religious effect on the Hellenic people until after the Christian Church had in a sense accepted, approved, and given it its supreme sanction. In other words, Platonism did its refining, spiritualizing, and elevating work more after the Christian theologians accepted it as a precious vehicle of the church's teaching than it had ever done before. What it needed was a standard by which the actual truth in it might be estimated, and so admiration for it as a philosophy be turned into reverence for it as revelation. This standard was found in the Gospel of Christianity. That it had meanwhile exerted a certain intellectual influence of the highest importance in preparing, not only the Hellenic world, but the whole mind of the intelligent world at that period, for its future reception of the revealed Word, cannot be questioned ; rather we may say it was an indispensable forerunner sent by the Divine Providence for this training of the "understanding, so that it might be elevated into the light of heaven," even while the will of humanity lay still degraded in its lost and helpless condition.

In an article elsewhere on the "Italian Renaissance in its Relation to the Lord's Second Advent," I endeavour to show how these extraordinary intellectual illuminations have preceded alike, and in both instances by a period of about four centuries, the

two immediate revelations of Divine truth to mankind, namely, that of the Incarnation, and that of the opening of the Spiritual Sense of the Word, which constitute in spiritual reality the first and the second Advents of the Lord; and that the wide prevalence of Hellenic culture, which anticipated the first coming of the Lord as the Word made Flesh, has its remarkable counterpart in the intellectual influence of the Italian Renaissance or the revival of learning in preparing the world for the reception of that deeper revelation of the Word in His Second Coming, which has enabled the Church to "enter intellectually into the things of faith."

Referring the reader to the following essays for a treatment of this subject in its broader aspects, I wish in the present paper to examine in the briefest possible scope the part which Dante's *Commedia* has had to play in this providential course of the world's education, and the estimate we are to put upon the description he gives us of the life after death. While not contributing directly to the Revival of Learning, the great Italian epic may be said to be a summary of all the learning of that time, whether astrological, geographical, political, theological, or moral. It is not so much a poem as a great realistic picture of the whole universe, spiritual and natural, as it then stood clearly outlined in the view of the mighty intellect of its author. The language in which it was written became thereby elevated to the dignity of a literary tongue to be honoured by a glorious succession of poets,

historians, and philosophers; while the subject-matter became, as above described, a kind of universally accepted "working hypothesis" regarding the nature of the spiritual world, whereby the great gap in authentic dogmatic teaching was conveniently filled out in a manner suited to the imaginative wants of the people, and to the practical demands of moral and religious discipline. By a comparison with such works as Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, we can form, I believe, an approximate estimate of the actual effect produced by this grand epic of the unseen world upon the popular religious mind, not only of contemporary, but of succeeding generations,—remembering too, as we must, that Dante preceded Milton by a period as long as that from the discovery of America by Columbus to the end of the Revolutionary War.

Referring to the analogy briefly alluded to above, I think we shall find a close resemblance between the kind of authority hitherto attributed to Dante's visions of the other world, and that which, before the Christian era, was attributed to the teachings of Socrates and Plato in relation to the life after death. According to the light of the time, these visions were neither improbable nor unreasonable; not only not contrary to Scripture, they seemed like the boldest literal confirmation of the teaching of both the Bible and the Church Fathers. Still there was much in them that could be traced directly to no sacred source of authority, and this sometimes

embraced principles of vast and fundamental importance. How much, then, of truthful information might men really look for in this vastly popular allegory, this great myth that has been throwing its awful lustre, now bright, now dark, over the groping thoughts of the Christian world during the centuries that preceded the Lord's Second Advent?

To this question no answer could be given but by comparing the visions of Dante with something that could be accepted as a standard of truth on these same subjects, and such a standard could only be found in Revelation. But, as Revelation, beyond the bare indications of a few broad, general truths on the subject of the judgment and heaven and hell, has been believed to contain no particulars regarding the life after death, therefore there has been for the Christian Church no means of estimating the amount of actual truth in Dante's description of heaven, purgatory, and hell.

In a state of similar doubt, or mere guessing at the reality, in regard to which there is no accepted standard of revealed truth, stands the world at the present day except for such as receive the revelation given in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. This messenger and servant of the Lord has, so he avers, been permitted by the Lord to enter that hitherto hidden world, and to tell now in plain, unpoetical, and un fanciful terms the facts regarding its nature, its order, its government, and its life. For the first time are men, in the possession of these writings, possessed of a standard whereby, on the

ground of their authenticity, they may, with an accuracy and a certainty no less than scientific, determine the amount of truth really embodied in the visions of Dante.

It is not for a moment to be understood that Dante ever gave his visions forth as other than pure poetry, or as having more than an allegoric basis of truth; nor that the world has ever formally sanctioned them as having anything of a supernatural character; neither has it done so with Milton or Bunyan; and yet who will say that the religious thought and the anticipations of the other life of Protestant Christian minds for the past two centuries, have not been greatly tinged by the reflections cast from the imaginations of these two writers? So with Dante, while neither professedly prophet nor seer, nor pope, nor doctor of theology; yet in reality the power of his great poem has been that of all these combined in colouring the thoughts and affections of men in their visions of the world to come. And, while granting to Dante his full title of poet as a truly great creator of these imaginary worlds through which he leads us in his awful pilgrimage, yet even the imagination must have some material, and some scaffolding of information, of former doctrine or knowledge of some kind, on which and with which to build. And it is this question as to fundamental sources of Dante's ideas of the spiritual world that chiefly interests us in attempting a comparison between Dante and Swedenborg.

The natural inference would be that Dante, in writing an account of an imaginary pilgrimage through hell and purgatory and heaven, would describe those realms according to the vulgar conceptions then entertained, something as the miracle plays have done, or that the common traditions of the church and the few grand hints of the literal Scriptures would have sufficed for the material to be employed. As a matter of fact, we find, in one sense, the heaven and the hell of Dante a very narrow, commonplace, every-day kind of world; more so even than that of the *Memorable Relations*, or those interviews with spirits and descriptions of the scenery of the spiritual world which Swedenborg has interspersed in the course of his doctrinal writings. The people that Dante meets with in that world are his former over-the-way, Florentine neighbours, who inquire about their relatives, or wish to be informed as to the progress of public affairs in their quarrelsome little town. The rewards and punishments of eternity are dispensed very considerably according to the poet's own resentment or favour towards his former political associates; the scenery, the manners and customs, the courtesies and the jeers and insults he meets with are all reflected from the narrow sphere of north Italian life. When we come to broader subjects, we find indeed the poet's vision and grasp widening accordingly, but still subject to the limitations of traditional learning.

Thus his cosmology and geography are those of

Homer, Plato, and the literal Bible combined ; the earth being in the centre of the universe surrounded by the seven planetary spheres, or revolving heavens, beyond which is the heaven of fixed stars, then the moving but unmoved sphere of the seraphim and angels all concentrating above in the "Rose of the blessed," on whose petals as on thrones in successive ranks are seated the saints and innocent children all surrounding the lake of the Light inapproachable, where dwells the Atomic Point, the eternal Three-in-One. On the earth's surface, in the middle of the eastern hemisphere, is situated Jerusalem, directly beneath which the hells descend in successive degrees to the inmost point or the earth's centre, where is the abode of Lucifer ; thence is an ascent through the other side of the earth to a high projection or mountain far out in the midst of the ocean beyond the gates of Hercules, forming the middle point of the western hemisphere and the exact antipodes of Jerusalem. On this mountain are the successive planes or spheres of purgatory, culminating in the terrestrial Eden, from which the ascent opens into the lowest of the planetary heavens or abodes of saved souls.

The assignment of souls to their several degrees and kinds and places of punishment and reward involves a classification of moral virtues partly traceable to the Aristotelian ethics and partly to the theology of the Christian Fathers ; and the discussions introduced, here and there, of profound theological topics reveal the poet's familiarity with

the best fruits of both the philosophy and theology of all the ages that had preceded him. So we find the man mounting with his theme; minute, blunt, and familiar in his descriptions of the *Inferno*; in the *Paradiso* his language wears the garb of an archangel, dazzling us with its splendour and opening to us vistas of unsearchable light. It is said that his name was, in its original form, *Durante*, and so his whole name, *Durante Allighieri*, might be said to mean the Enduring Winged One. And with an eagle's flight his imagination, his ardour, and his philosophy and Christian faith combined, mount straight upward to the sun, the more and more unhindered in his gaze as he soars away from earth.

But whether, taking him in his widest and sublimest capacity as a poet, or in his most local and personal narrowness as an exiled and embittered Florentine, and giving due credit to both contemporary and older philosophy and theology for his ideas, whether of earth or heaven or of the nature of man, we shall still, I believe, find in Dante much that is difficult to trace literally to any earlier source, much that seems wholly beyond and above the ordinary theological scope of Christian teaching, much that in its strong, direct declaring of things untold before, makes the poet seem to speak rather like a seer and prophet than like a mere rhymster of the sacred fictions of his time.

I refer especially to certain broad features of the plan of the poem, involving principles of classifica-

tion which bear a close resemblance to those of Swedenborg, and also to certain ideas and definitions, both of human and Divine nature, which gleam with the unmistakable light of revealed truth. That these were never understood fully by even the poet himself, in all their deepest significance, in fact as anything more than poetic intuition or invention, may be readily admitted ; that they never have brought to man any accredited Divine message is also true ; but that they are in reality foregleams of that great dawn of light which has in this later time risen upon the world through the revelations granted to Swedenborg, and that the great poem is thus rich in a wisdom whose worth will rather brighten than diminish in lustre as it is brought under the light of the knowledge now revealed, we may confidently believe. By the side of its numerous passages luminous with spiritual truth, we shall indeed find others in close contiguity so intrinsically absurd, so grossly offensive to our sense of charity and of justice, or characterized by so rigid and blind an adherence to the orthodoxy of the poet's time, whether in things theological, political, or scientific, that we can be in no danger of forgetting the frail human authorship of the poem and the wide distinction that must ever be drawn between this epic of mediæval imagination and the great relation which now comes to us, in terms of unmistakable authority, *ex visis et auditis*, from "things heard and seen." Nothing could more emphatically declare this distinction than the words with which

Swedenborg, in all the consciousness of his sacred and responsible mission as a revealer of things hitherto kept secret from the foundation of the world, explains the purpose of his intromission into the spiritual world. Here we find nothing of the grey twilight of the land of dreams, nothing of the splendours of ecstatic vision ; rather is it the plain testimony of a man charged with an important message to his fellow-men, of which he was more mindful that the substance be truly given than that the form should be pleasing to the recipient. Henry James, sen., says of Swedenborg's style of writing :

. . . . "His books are a dry, unimpassioned, unexaggerated exposition of the things he daily saw and heard in the world of spirits, and of the spiritual laws which these things illustrate ; with scarcely any effort whatever to blink the obvious outrage his experiences offer to sensuous prejudice, or to conciliate any interest in his reader which is not prompted by the latter's own original and unaffected relish of the truth. Such sincere books, it seems to me, were never before written" (*Substance and Shadow*).

Dante begins his poem by narrating how,—

Midway upon the journey of our life
I found me in a dark and dreary wood
Where the straight way to me no more appeared.

Nor know I how to tell how I did come there,
So full of sleep was I at that strange moment ;
When the true way I had abandoned.

He falls in with three wild beasts, and in his terror comes upon the shade of Virgil, who offers

to become his guide through the fearful caverns of the lower world and out into the upper spheres again. After much fear and hesitation he consents to follow his guide upon this sombre pilgrimage. And so they enter the fearful gate which forms the entrance to the hells, over which is written the memorable words :

By me they enter to the doleful city,
By me they go into eternal pain,
By me they seek the dwellings of the lost,
Justice did move the hand of my great builder ;
I was constructed by the power Divine
The highest Wisdom and the primal Love.
Before my being, were no things created,
Only th' eternal ; and I shall ever be.
Bid hope farewell, all ye who enter here.

Virgil explains the meaning of these words, leads the poet within, and thus, says Dante,

He ushered me *within the secret things*.

Compare this with the following announcement which Swedenborg makes at the beginning of his *Heaven and Hell* :

"In the end of the church, when there is no longer love and thence no faith, the Lord is to open the Word as to its internal sense and to reveal the hidden things of heaven. The hidden things which are revealed in what now follows (that is, in the treatise on *Heaven and Hell*) concern heaven and hell and the life of men after death. The man of the Church at this day knows scarcely anything about heaven and hell, nor about his life after death, although they are all described in the Word ; yea, many also who were born within the church deny those things, saying, Who has come thence and told us ?

"Lest therefore such denial, which reigns especially with those who have much wisdom of the world, should also infect and corrupt the simple in heart and the simple in faith, it has been given me to be together with the angels, and to speak with them as man with man, and also to see the things which are in the heavens and in the hells, and this during thirteen years; and now to describe them from things seen and heard, hoping that thus ignorance may be enlightened and incredulity dispelled" (Introduction to *Heaven and Hell*).

In what manner, then, we are led to inquire, does the picture drawn in the *Divina Commedia* bear the test of that light of actual knowledge which has now, according to this declaration, been given to the world?

To trace in detail all the coincidences of description between the poem of Dante and the *Heaven and Hell* of Swedenborg would require volumes rather than the few pages at our disposal. The most I can attempt will be to point out a few of the remarkable analogies and resemblances between the two works, leaving the reader at his pleasure to pursue the subject more into particulars.*

The first thing I would call attention to is the every-day, human reality which Dante gives to the spiritual world. No world is more substantial, visible, and tangible, or crowded with more busy,

* For a study of this kind I know of no English work more helpful than the very interesting volume entitled, *A Shadow of Dante; being an Essay towards studying Himself, His World, and His Pilgrimage*, by Maria Francesca Rossetti. London: Rivingtons. 1871. For a translation, I believe Longfellow's to be far superior to any other.

practical, human activity than the spheres visited by the poet's imagination. This is no world of ghosts or of shades leading an unconscious existence until some future judgment-day shall wake them to life again ; they are all intensely alive now, and alive as men and women in human bodies, recognizable and still possessing all the leading traits of character that they had in the world. Of this human reality of the life after death Swedenborg writes as follows :

"That man when he passes out of the natural world into the spiritual, as is the case when he dies, carries with him all things that are his, or which belong to him as a man, except his earthly body, has been testified to me by manifold experience ; for man when he enters the spiritual world, or the life after death, is in a body as in the world ; to appearance there is no difference, since he does not perceive or see any difference. But his body is then spiritual, and thus separated or purified from earthly things, and when what is spiritual touches and sees what is spiritual, it is just as when what is natural touches and sees what is natural : hence a man, when he has become a spirit, does not know otherwise than that he is in his body in which he was in the world, and thus does not know that he has deceased. A man-spirit also enjoys every external and internal sense which he enjoyed in the world ; he sees as before, he hears and speaks as before, he also smells and tastes, and when he is touched, he feels the touch as before ; he also longs, desires, craves, thinks, reflects, is affected, loves, wills, as before ; and he who is delighted with studies, reads and writes as before. In a word, when a man passes from one life into the other, or from one world into the other, it is as if he passed from one place into another ; and he carries with him all things which he possessed in himself

as a man, so that it cannot be said that the man after death, which is only the death of the earthly body, has lost anything of himself. He also carries with him the natural memory, for he retains all things whatsoever which he has in the world heard, seen, read, learned, and thought, from earliest infancy even to the end of life ; the natural objects however which are in the memory, because they cannot be reproduced in the spiritual world, are quiescent, as is the case with a man when he does not think from them ; but still they are reproduced when it pleases the Lord " (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 461).

It is true, Dante speaks of the Last Judgment as yet to come, but the wicked are in hell already, notwithstanding, and all the change the final judgment will effect in their case will be to finally close the pits which still remain open only for more to enter. So are the good already enjoying the blessed life of heaven, and the spirits not yet purified are lingering a longer and shorter time in the outer courts according to the preparation they need to undergo. In a word, it is a perfectly human world that Dante visits ; it is almost a Florentine world in parts, so real and familiar does the poet make its scenes ; even as Swedenborg speaks of certain cities of earth having their counterparts in the world of spirits. Unlike Milton, who makes his personages wear a kind of stage-like, artificial dignity in speech and bearing corresponding with his lofty theme, Dante puts the commonest, everyday phrases into his conversations, and so intensely human are the very griefs and sorrows he describes, that we are moved by a pathos that is irresistible.

It may seem as as if the realism of Dante's description must be largely destroyed by his introduction of griffons, centaurs, and other monstrous forms more suggestive of pagan mythology than of ordinary human experience; but it is well to remember that even the monsters of mythology were not without a cause and a meaning, often a very practical one; and how large a part such actual perversions and distortions of humanity do actually play in the real hells of Swedenborg, we need only read such passages as the following to learn:

"At the apertures (to the infernal societies), which are called the gates of hell, for the most part appears a monster which in general represents the form of those who are within. The fierce passions of those who dwell there are then at the same time represented by dreadful and atrocious things, the particular mention of which I omit. . . . From an inspection of those monstrous forms of spirits in the hells, which as was said are all forms of contempt of others, and of menaces against those who do not pay them honour and respect, also forms of hatred and revenge against those who do not favour them, it appeared evident that all in general were forms of the love of self and the love of the world; and that the evils of which they are the specific forms derive their origin from these two loves" (*Heaven and Hell*, nos. 553, 554).

We have next to notice that in the general divisions of the spiritual world, Dante adheres to the numbers three, seven, and nine, in a manner wholly in accord with their real spiritual meaning; and in his trinal classification there is a strong semblance of the doctrine of the degrees of the

human mind. These degrees are thus described by Swedenborg :

“ He who does not know how it is with Divine order as to degrees, cannot comprehend how the heavens are distinct, nor even what the internal and the external man are. Most people in the world have no other notion concerning interiors and exteriors, or concerning superiors and inferiors, than as of something continuous or of what coheres by continuity from purer to grosser ; and yet interiors and exteriors are not continuous with each other but discrete. There are degrees of two kinds ; there are continuous degrees and degrees not continuous. Continuous degrees are as the degrees of the decrease of light from flame even to its obscurity ; or as the degrees of the decrease of sight, from those things which are in light to those which are in shade ; or as the degrees of the purity of the atmosphere, from the lowest part of it to the highest : distances determine these degrees. On the other hand, degrees not continuous, but discrete, are discriminated as prior and posterior, as cause and effect, as what produces and what is produced. He who examines will see, that in all and each of the things in the universal world, whatever they are, there are such degrees of production and composition ; namely, that from one is another, and from the other a third, and so on. He who does not procure to himself a perception of these degrees cannot possibly know the distinctions of the heavens, and the distinctions of the interior and exterior faculties of man ; nor the distinction between the spiritual world and the natural world ; nor the distinction between the spirit of man and his body. Hence he cannot understand what and whence correspondences and representations are, nor what influx is. Sensual men do not comprehend these distinctions, for they make increments and decrements even according to these degrees, continuous ; hence they cannot conceive of what is spiritual otherwise than as a purer natural. . . .

"The interiors of man, which are of his mind (*mens*) and mind (*animus*), are also in similar order [of degrees]; he has an inmost, a middle, and a lowest: for into man when he was created, all things of Divine order were brought together, so that he was made Divine order in form, and thence a heaven in its least effigy. Therefore also man communicates with the heavens as to his interiors, and likewise comes among the angels after death; among the angels of the inmost heaven, of the middle, or of the lowest, according to his reception of Divine Good and Truth from the Lord, while he lived in the world" (*Heaven and Hell*, nos. 38, 30).

According to the Christian belief, universally entertained up to the time of the Reformation, the world of the departed consists of three grand divisions, hell, purgatory, and heaven; and the descriptions of these in the order of the poet's pilgrimage through them constitute respectively the three great canticles of the *Divina Commedia*, named accordingly, *Il Inferno*, *Il Purgatorio*, and *Il Paradiso*. Of this trinal division of the whole spiritual world, Swedenborg says:

"The world of spirits is a middle place between heaven and hell, and also it is a middle state of man after death. That it is a middle place, was manifest to me from this, that the hells are beneath, and the heavens above; and that it is a middle state, from this, that man, so long as he is there, is not yet in heaven or in hell. The state of heaven with man is the conjunction of good and truth with him, and the state of hell is the conjunction of evil and falsity with him. When with a man-spirit good is conjoined to truth, then he comes into heaven, because, as was said, that conjunction is heaven with him; but when with a man-spirit evil is conjoined with falsity,

then he comes into hell, because that conjunction is hell with him. This conjunction is made in the world of spirits, since man is then in a middle state. It is alike, whether you say the conjunction of the understanding and the will, or the conjunction of truth and good" (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 422).

The purgatory or intermediate world between hell and heaven corresponds to the world of spirits of Swedenborg in so far as it is the place of preparation for heaven for all those departing from this world who can be saved ; but those who are fit only for hell are carried thither at once across the dark flood of Acheron, according to the poet ; whereas we are taught in Swedenborg that all those who die, both good and bad alike, enter the intermediate world of spirits, and that there they undergo the judgment, and are prepared for their future lot either in the realms above or below. Swedenborg, however, draws this distinction between the use of this intermediate world for those who can and those who cannot be saved, that the former undergo there the three states, namely, "of their exteriors" and "of their interiors," which two states constitute their judgment, or the determination of their ruling love, and the third state which is that of "instruction and preparation" for heaven.

"This third state is therefore only for those who come into heaven and become angels, but not for those who come into hell, since these cannot be instructed, and their second state is also their third" (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 512).

Indeed we read that there are some

"who immediately after death are either taken up into heaven, or cast into hell. Those who are immediately taken up into heaven are those who have been regenerated, and thus prepared for heaven in the world. Those who are so regenerated and prepared that they have need only to reject natural impurities with the body, are borne immediately by the angels into heaven. I have seen them taken up soon after the hour of death. But those who have been interiorly wicked, and exteriorly, as to appearance, good, thus who have filled their malignity with deceit and have used goodness as a means of deceiving, are immediately cast into hell" (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 491).

Here it may be well to notice that in Dante as in Swedenborg all the bodily conditions and surroundings of souls in the other world, are really representatives and effects of inward moral conditions. For in a letter to one of his patrons Dante writes :

"The subject of all the work, accepted literally only, is the state of souls after death, taken simply ; because respecting it and around it the process of all the work revolves. But if the work is accepted allegorically, the subject is man, in so far as by free-will meriting and demeriting he is amenable to the justice of reward and punishment" (*Letter to Caf. Grande della Scala*, 7).

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II.

PURGATORY AND THE INTERMEDIATE WORLD.

THE purgatory of Dante is a mountain of seven terraces, each occupied by the penitents who patiently endure the sufferings necessary for their purgation from their respective grade of sins. These grades, seven in all, are divided into three grand classes according to the perversion of love in which they consist. The Angel of Judgment engraves the sevenfold "P" (*peccata*, sins) on the poet's forehead, indicating that in the penitent the consciousness of these inward defects is brought forth and their stains one by one removed as he ascends the scale. The first three sins are those of love distorted, namely, pride, envy, and anger; the fourth is from love defective or indifferent, sloth; the last three are from love excessive, avarice, gluttony, lasciviousness. The first class, it will be noticed, consists in the turning of love from its true object, its holy source and giver; the second in a lack of determination, a state of vacillation between the higher and lower objects of love; the third, the excessive gratification of the lower or natural loves to the detriment of the higher. The ascent is from the inmost and most difficult

to overcome, which is pride. All the terraces are comparatively easy to climb after this one is passed.

We now were mounting up the sacred stairs,
And it appeared to me by far more easy
Than on the plain it has appeared before.
Whence I? "My Master, say, what heavy thing
Has been uplifted from me, so that hardly
Aught of fatigue is felt by me in walking?"

He answered: "When the P's which have remained
Still in thy face, almost obliterate,
Shall wholly, as the first is, be erased,
Thy feet shall be so vanquished by good-will
That not alone they shall not feel fatigue,
But urging up will be to them delight."

(*Purgatorio XII. 114, Longfellow's translation.*)

Thus with the overcoming of pride more than half of our human battle is fought, and the "way that leads to heaven is not so difficult as has been supposed." Moreover, the doctrine seems distinctly stated here that, as each evil is overcome in temptation, the Lord gives a good will or good affection in its place which makes the way upward ever more a delight and less a labour. Sins of appetite and of worldly love are placed above those of pride, envy, and anger, being more external and less deadly.

It is in the *Purgatorio* that, perhaps more than in any other part of the whole poem, we find our common human sympathies appealed to, and feel the singular tenderness that forms so beautiful a trait of the great poet. We find ourselves not

wholly lifted above the earthly atmospheres, so that, as it were, the sound of church bells, the chant of evening hymn, the old, familiar anthems sung by the Church on earth through centuries after centuries, and the words of the old Bible, still linger in our ears.

Of this first state of man on his entrance at death into the spiritual world, Swedenborg teaches :

“The spirit of man is held in its last thought when the body expires, until it returns to the thoughts which are from its general or ruling affection in this world”
“His first state after death is similar to his state in the world, because then he is similarly in the externals of his life. Hence it is that he then knows no otherwise than that he is still in the world, unless he pays attention to those things which present themselves, and to those which were said to him by the angels when he was raised up, that he is now a spirit. Thus one life is continued into the other, and death is only the passage. Because the spirit of man recently departed from the world is such, therefore he is then recognized by his friends, and by those whom he had known in the world ; for spirits perceive this, not only from his face and speech, but also from the sphere of his life when they approach. Every one in the other life, when he thinks of another, presents also to himself his face in thought, and at the same time some things which are of his life ; and when he does this, the other becomes present, as if he was sent for and called. This exists in the spiritual world from the fact that thoughts are there communicated, and that there are not such spaces there as exist in the natural world. Hence it is that all when they first come into the other life, are recognized by their friends, their relatives, and those known to them in any way ; and also that they talk together, and afterwards associate according to their

friendship in the world. I have frequently heard that those who have come from the world, have rejoiced at seeing their friends again, and that their friends in turn have rejoiced that they had come to them" (*Heaven and Hell*, nos. 493, 494).

After this first state, according to Swedenborg, follows the second, which is that of being admitted into the interior knowledge of one's own nature and undergoing the consequent judgments, conviction, and condemnation of one's evils: after which, for those who shall enter heaven, follows the third state, which is that of instruction and initiation into the angelic life. Thus we read:

"After spirits have been by instructions prepared for heaven in the above-mentioned places, which is effected in a short time, on account of their being in spiritual ideas, which comprehend several things together, they are then clothed with angelic garments, which are mostly white, as of fine linen; and thus they are brought to the way which tends upwards to heaven, and are delivered to the angels there, and are afterwards received by other angels and introduced into societies, and into many blessed things. Every one is next led by the Lord into his own society, which also is effected by various ways, sometimes by winding paths. The ways by which they are led are not known to any angel, but to the Lord alone. When they come to their own society, their interiors are then opened, and since these are conformable to the interiors of the angels who are in that society, they are therefore immediately acknowledged and received with joy" (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 519).

In Dante's picture of the progress upward through Purgatory, as each sin is overcome, the sound of angel voices is heard singing the anthem of

victory in the words of the corresponding blessing from Matt. v., and the approach of the liberating angel is thus described :

Towards us came the being beautiful,
Vested in white, and in his countenance
Such as appears the tremulous morning star.

One penitent is heard softly singing the familiar complin hymn, "*Te lucis ante terminum*"—"Before the ending of the day," when

'Twas now the hour that turneth back desire
In those who sail the sea, and melts the heart
The day they've said to their sweet friends farewell,
And the new pilgrim penetrates with love,
If he doth hear from far away a bell
That seemeth to deplore the dying day.

A great company of newly-arrived spirits brought by the angel of death to the shores of this world of trial, is heard chanting altogether in one voice the Psalm, "When Israel went out of Egypt"; and as the gate is opened admitting to the first terrace, *Te Deum Laudamus* is heard resounding from within. At length from the suffering throng of the penitents for pride—

—more or less bent down
According as they more or less were laden,

and of whom—

—he who had most patience in his looks,
Weeping did seem to say, "I can no more,"

is heard this utterance of the Lord's Prayer :

Our Father, Thou who dwellest in the heavens,
Not circumscribed, but from the greater love
Thou bearest to the first effects on high,
Praised be Thy Name and Thine Omnipotence
By every creature, as befitting is,
To render thanks to Thy sweet effluence.
Come unto us the peace of Thy dominion,
For unto it we cannot of ourselves,
If it come not, with all our intellect.
Even as Thine own angels of their will
Make sacrifice to Thee, hosanna singing,
So may all men make sacrifice of theirs.
Give unto us this day our daily manna,
Withouten which in this rough wilderness
Backward goes he who toils most to advance.
And even as we the trespass we have suffered
Pardon in one another, pardon Thou
Benignly, and regard not our desert.
Our virtue, which is easily o'ercome,
Put not to proof with the old adversary,
But Thou from him who spurs it so, deliver.

(Purgatorio XI. 1-24.)

A spirit reflecting on the utter corruption of the world, thus instructs Dante on the cause of evil and on man's responsibility :

Ye who are living every cause refer
Still upward to the heavens, as if all things
They of necessity moved with themselves.
If this were so, in you would be destroyed
Free-will, nor any justice would there be
In having joy for good, or grief for evil.
The heavens your movements do initiate,—
I say not all ; but granting that I say it,
Light has been given you for good and evil

And free volition, which, if some fatigue
In the first battles with the heavens it suffers,
Afterwards conquers all, if well 'tis nurtured.
To greater force and to a better nature,
Though free, ye subject are, and that creates
The mind in you the heavens have not in charge.
Hence if the present world doth go astray,
In you the cause is, be it sought in you.

(Purgatorio XVI. 67-85.)

Of this free volition of man, or his following his life's ruling love as determining his future state, and no intervention of God's mercy, which would destroy that freedom, Swedenborg teaches :

"I can testify from much experience that it is impossible to implant the life of heaven in those who have in the world led a life opposite to the life of heaven. There were some who believed that they should easily receive Divine Truths after death, when they heard them from the angels, and that they should believe them, and should then change their lives, and thus could be received into heaven. But this was tried with very many, yet only with those who were in such a belief, to whom the trial was permitted in order that they might know that repentance is not given after death. Some of those with whom the trial was made, understood truths and seemed to receive them, but as soon as they turned to the life of their love, they rejected them, and even spoke against them. Some rejected them immediately, being unwilling to hear them. Some were desirous that the life of their love, which they had acquired in the world, might be taken away from them, and that angelic life, or the life of heaven might be infused in its place. This likewise, by permission, was accomplished, but when the life of their love was taken away, they lay as dead, and had no longer the use of their faculties. From these and other kinds of experience the

simply good were instructed, that the life of any one cannot in any wise be changed after death, and that evil life cannot in any degree be transmuted into good life, or infernal life into angelic, inasmuch as every spirit, from head to foot, is in quality such as his love is, and thence such as his life is, and thus to transmute this life into the opposite is altogether to destroy the spirit. The angels declare that it were easier to change a night-bird into a dove, and an owl into a bird of paradise, than an infernal spirit into an angel of heaven. Man after death, therefore, remains of such a quality as his life had been in the world. From these things it may now be manifest, that no one can be received into heaven by immediate mercy" (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 527).

I cannot leave this brief notice of the Purgatorio without quoting a few lines of rare beauty, describing the appearing to the poet of two noted women, the one supposed to be identified with the Countess Matilda of Tuscany, a wealthy and zealous adherent of the Guelph party in the eleventh century; and the other the saintly Beatrice, who on earth had been the idol of the poet's early love, and afterwards had, in his almost religious devotion, become transfigured into the embodiment of celestial wisdom, and who as such now, when the earthly Eden is reached on the uppermost plain of purgatory, is ready to conduct Dante upward through these heavenly spheres which the unbaptized Virgil may not presume to enter. Of the first vision of Matilda we read:

And lo! my further course a stream cut off
Which toward the left hand with its little waves
Bent down the grass that on its margin sprang.

.
 With feet I stayed, and with mine eyes I passed
 Beyond the rivulet, to look upon
 The great variety of the fresh May ;
 And there appeared to me (even as appears
 Suddenly something that doth turn aside
 Through very wonder every other thought)
 A lady all alone, who went along
 Singing and culling floweret after floweret,
 With which her pathway was all painted over.

(*Purgatorio XXVIII.* 24.)

A great procession is seen in which patriarchs, prophets, and elders, the symbolic living beings of Ezekiel's vision, the eagle and the lion typical of our Lord's Divine and human natures, the theological and the cardinal virtues, the evangelists and apostles, pass by in impressive pomp amid the shining of the seven golden candlesticks and the singing of hosannas ; and at last the descent of Beatrice is thus announced :

Ere now have I beheld as day began,
 The eastern hemisphere all tinged with rose,
 And the other heaven with fair serene adorned ;
 And the sun's face, uprising, overshadowed
 So that by tempering influence of vapours
 For a long interval the eye sustained it ;
 Thus in the bosom of a cloud of flowers
 Which from those hands angelical ascended,
 And downward fell again inside and out
 Over her snow-white veil with olive cinct,
 Appeared a lady under a green mantle
 Vested in colour of the living flame.

(*Purgatorio XXX.* 23.)

Is there not a kind of heavenly atmosphere

about these visions, reminding us of similar passages here and there in the *Memorabilia* of Swedenborg? The following is his description of the approach of an angel:

"There appeared to me an angel flying beneath the eastern heaven with a trumpet in his hand, which he held to his mouth, and sounded towards the north, the west, and the south. He was clad in a robe which waved behind him as he flew along, and was girded around the waist with a band which seemed as it were on fire and radiant with carbuncles and sapphires: he flew with his body in a horizontal posture, and gently alighted on the ground near where I was standing. As soon as he touched the earth with his feet, he stood erect and walked to and fro; but on seeing me he immediately directed his steps toward me. I was in the spirit, and was standing in that state on a hill in the southern quarter of the spiritual world" (*Conjugal Love*, no. 2).

But before following the poet upward in his journey through the heavens, we must now for a moment turn back and notice some interesting coincidences between the picture of the hells which Dante has drawn, and the teachings afforded us in Swedenborg on that subject.

III.

THE HELLS.

ACCORDING to Dante the hells like the heavens are nine in number, but exist in three grand divisions or degrees. These three degrees of the hells may be named those of Incontinence, Folly, and Malice. Incontinence comprises the bodily lusts and passions, the victims of which are punished in the upper circles and in descending order ; these are lasciviousness, gluttony, avarice with prodigality, and anger with melancholy. The middle circle or intermediate degree is occupied by the sins of folly, or to use the poet's term, bestialism, by which he means that character "like unto the beast that perisheth," which belongs to him who "is in honour and understandeth not." Sins of heresy, infidelity, and materialism are here included—in a word of the "fools that have said in their hearts, There is no God." Beneath these are the hells of malice in their descending degrees, divided chiefly into the two classes, of the hells of violence and the hells of fraud and treachery.

Here we see a division corresponding to the three degrees of the human mind, the natural, the spiritual, and the celestial, but with their respective love

perverted to their opposites. In the hells these become degrees of the natural mind, for the spiritual and celestial degrees are never opened in those who go there, and the trine is that of the perverted sensual appetites, the perverted scientific and rational faculties, and the perverted inmost love. We read in Swedenborg :

"Most of the hells are threefold, the superior ones with-in appearing in thick darkness, because inhabited by those in the falsities of evil, but the inferior ones appearing fiery, because inhabited by those who are in the evils themselves. In the deeper hells are those who have acted interiorly from evil, but in the less deep those who have acted exteriorly" (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 586).

Now it is not a little remarkable that in the lowest circles of hell, among the lowest of the malicious, Dante places the treacherous and fraudulent, and these embrace all seducers, flatterers, hypocrites, discord breeders, and thieves ; and Swedenborg says, in treating of the fifth Commandment, "Thou shalt not steal :"

"The evil of theft enters more deeply into a man than any other evil, because it is conjoined with cunning and deceit ; and cunning and deceit insinuate themselves even into the spiritual mind of a man, wherein is his thought with the understanding" (*Doctrine of Life*, no. 81).

The trinal division of the hells follows that of the heavens in, of course, an inverted order. And as there are the three heavens corresponding to the celestial, spiritual, and natural degrees, so must there be corresponding hells.

“Inasmuch as in general there are three heavens, therefore also there are in general three hells: the lowest which is opposed to the inmost or third heaven, the middle which is opposed to the middle or second heaven, and the highest which is opposed to the lowest or first heaven” (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 542).

The lowest of the hells must therefore be inhabited by those who are in the most intense lust of dominion from self-love, and in the most intense hatred to the Lord. Dante calls these the violent and the fraudulent, observing a kind of distinction into the two kingdoms of the voluntary and the intellectual, but still placing the fraudulent at the bottom because of the interior nature of their cunning and deceit.

The love of falsity and the selfish love of the world occupy the middle degree, corresponding to the perverted rational principle, and here Dante places the City of Dis, the habitation of the fools, or those who have become as beasts through infidelity and heresy. Of these two hells, namely, of the perverted loves of the world and of self which constitute, we may say, the corruption and death of the spiritual and celestial degrees of man's mind, Swedenborg says :

“The hells in the western quarter are the worst of all, and are most horrible; in these are they who in the world have been in the love of self, and thence in the contempt of others and in enmity against those who did not favour themselves. It is their greatest delight to exercise cruelty; but this delight in the other life is turned against themselves. . . . The dreadfulfulness of the hells decreases from

the northern quarter to the southern, and likewise toward the east. To the east are they who have been haughty, and have not believed in a Divine, but still have not been in such hatred and revenge, nor in such deceit, as they who are in a greater depth there in the western quarter" (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 587).

How horrible these hells are, how grievous the punishments there suffered, how gross and revolting the delights of evil in which the wicked find their life, and how monstrous the forms into which their bodies are distorted, we are enabled by Swedenborg to judge from the examples he has given in *Heaven and Hell*, and especially when we reflect that there were seen things so revolting that he was not permitted to reveal them. He tells us of the appearance as of ruined cities and houses after fires, of habitations of filth ; of barren, sandy deserts, ragged rocks and dark caves and dens, chasms and whirlpools and bogs and lakes of fire (see nos. 583-587). Of the appearance of those in hell we read :

"In general they are forms of their own evils ; thus of contempt of others, of hatred of various kinds, and of various kinds of revenge. Fierceness and cruelty from their interiors are manifest through all their forms : but when others commend, venerate, and worship them, their faces are contracted and have an appearance of gladness from delight. In general their faces are dreadful and void of life like corpses ; in some black ; in some fiery like little torches ; in some disfigured with sores and ulcers ; in some no face appears, but in its stead something hairy or bony ; and in some teeth only are exhibited" (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 553).

What reader of Dante will not recall here that

most fearful picture ever drawn perhaps by human pen, the scene in the lowest hells where two heads are seen, the one fast frozen in the ice, the other protruding above it and "gnawing, gnawing it." At Dante's inquiry :

That sinner from the savage meal his mouth
Uplifted, wiping it upon the hair
Of the head which he had wasted from behind,

and proceeds to tell who he is, and at the close we read :

When he had spoken this, with eyes askew
He took again the wretched skull with teeth
Which like a dog's upon the bone were strong.

(*Inferno XXXIII.* 1-78.)

We see here a man turned into the likeness of a dog, and we reflect on the correspondence of the teeth and the hair, and we feel that from this one picture of Dante's imagination we may sufficiently understand how it was possible that there were things seen by Swedenborg too horrible to reveal.

In the deepest abyss of hell, Dante places Lucifer in the appearance of a gigantic monster, and Swedenborg says :

"By Lucifer are meant those who are of Babel or Babylon, or those who extend their dominion unto heaven, [but] that there is not any one devil to whom the hells are subject, since all who are in the hells, like all who are in the heavens, are from the human race ; [and yet] the universal hell in one mass resembles one devil, and may likewise be presented in the image of one devil" (*Heaven and Hell*, nos. 544, 553).

One further interesting coincidence lies in the doctrine given and the pictures the poet draws regarding the intense cold of the lowest hells. Dante in reaching the circle, next to the abyss itself where Lucifer is held frozen in the ice, comes upon those "whose tears, congealing even as they sprang, blocked up the cavity of the eye with ice, which while permitting sight greatly increased torment by stopping up the vent of pain."

And one of the mournful of the freezing rind,
Cried unto us : O spirits cruel, so
As that the final frost is given ye,
Take from my face the hardened veils that I
May vent the sorrow which impregns my heart,
A little, ere again the weeping freeze.

And Swedenborg in speaking of the fire of hell says :

"It is to be known that those who are in the hells are not in fire, but that the fire is an appearance ; for they are not sensible there of any burning, but only of a heat such as they experienced in the world. The appearance of fire is from correspondence, for love corresponds to fire, and all things which appear in the spiritual world are according to correspondences.

"The above described fire or infernal heat is turned into intense cold when heat from heaven flows in ; and then the infernal inhabitants shiver like those who are seized with a cold fever, and are likewise inwardly tormented" (*Heaven and Hell*, nos. 571, 572).

IV.

THE HEAVENS.

THE heavens, like the hells, in Dante, are divided into three great divisions according to mental traits which prevail in them. Thus between the heavens of the more or less sanctified will, those whose affections "are still within the reach of the earth's shadow," being placed below, and those of pure, unshadowed heavenly love being above, there intervenes the mediate or transitional heaven of the understanding sanctified by the wisdom and knowledge growing out of faith and true heavenly doctrine. Here then, as in the hells, is clearly seen a distinction of the heavenly societies which corresponds to the natural, the intellectual or spiritual, and the inmost or celestial degrees of the human mind as taught by Swedenborg.

"There are three heavens, and these most distinct from each other; the inmost or third, the middle or second, and the lowest or first. They follow in succession, and subsist together, as the highest of man, which is the head, his middle, which is the body, and the lowest, which is the feet; and as the highest part of a house, its middle, and its lowest. In such order also is the Divine which proceeds and descends from the Lord: thence; from the necessity of order, heaven is threefold.

"The Divine which flows in from the Lord and is received in the inmost or third heaven, is called celestial, and hence the angels who are there are called celestial angels. The Divine which flows into the second or middle heaven, is called spiritual, and hence the angels who are there are called spiritual angels. But the Divine which flows in from the Lord and is received in the lowest or first heaven, is called natural. But because the natural of that heaven is not as the natural of the world, but has in it the spiritual and celestial, therefore that heaven is called spiritual and celestial-natural ; and hence the angels who are there are also called spiritual and celestial-natural.

"The love in which those are who are in the celestial kingdom is called celestial love ; and the love in which those are who are in the spiritual kingdom is called spiritual love. Celestial love is love to the Lord, and spiritual love is charity towards the neighbour. And because all good is of love, for what any one loves is to him good, therefore also the good of one kingdom is called celestial, and the good of the other spiritual" (*Heaven and Hell*, nos. 29, 31, 23).

Especially do we find a clear indication of the celestial sphere in those "blessed babes" who, according to Dante, are placed in the bosom of the white rose of the enthroned worshippers of the eternal. Of the infantile character of the celestial or third heaven, Swedenborg states :

"Those of the Third Heaven are the very innocences of heaven, for they, above all, love to be led by the Lord, as infants by their Father. Before the eyes of the angels of the lower heavens they appear as infants and as 'little ones,' and as not very wise, although they are the wisest of the angels of heaven. It was represented what genuine innocence is, by a most beautiful infant full of life, and naked : for the innocent themselves, who are in

the inmost heaven, and thus nearest to the Lord, before the eyes of other angels do not appear otherwise than as infants, and some of them naked ; for innocence is represented by nakedness without shame, as is read concerning the first man and his wife in paradise (Gen. ii. 25) ; wherefore also, when their state of innocence was lost, they were ashamed of their nakedness, and hid themselves (chap. iii. 7, 10, 11). In a word, the wiser the angels are, the more innocent they are, and the more innocent they are, the more they appear to themselves as infants ; hence it is that infancy in the Word signifies innocence" (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 341).

No one is in heaven who is not a worshipper of Christ, either as having once looked forward, or as now looking back to Him and His redemption. Central in this white rose of heaven is the lake of Divine light whose circumference would outreach the sun. And above and beyond this there is and can be nought save the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the eternal Trinity existing in the glorified Humanity of God incarnate. Says Swedenborg :

"In the universal heaven no other is acknowledged for the God of heaven but the Lord alone. They say there, as He Himself taught, that *He is one with the Father* ; that *the Father is in Him and He in the Father* ; that *he that seeth Him, seeth the Father* ; and that *everything holy proceedeth from Him* (John x. 30, 38 ; xiv. 10, 11 ; xvi. 13-15). I have often spoken with angels on this subject, and they have always said, that they cannot in heaven distinguish the Divine into three, since they know and perceive that the Divine is one, and that it is one in the Lord. They said, also, that those members of the Church who come from the world, entertaining

an idea of three Divines, cannot be admitted into heaven, since their thought wanders from one to another ; and it is not lawful there to think three and say one, because every one in heaven speaks from thought, for there speech is cogitative, or thought-speaking. Those therefore who in the world have distinguished the Divine into three, and received a separate idea concerning each, and have not made that idea one, and concentrated it in the Lord, cannot be received : for there is given in heaven a communication of all thoughts ; on which account, if one should come thither who thinks three and says one, he would be immediately discovered and rejected. But it is to be known, that all those who have not separated truth from good, or faith from love, in the other life, when instructed, receive the heavenly idea concerning the Lord, that He is the God of the universe " (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 2).

The nine heavens succeed one above another according to the order of the planets, and in visiting them Dante seems to be conversing with the inhabitants of the planets in succession, until in the last two or highest heavens he reaches the abode of the fixed stars and the crystalline sphere which surrounds the Eternal Light.

Beatrice, in explaining to Dante the appearance of the saints from the highest in the spheres of the lower planetary heavens, says :

These have not in any other heaven their seats
But all make beautiful the primal circle,
And have sweet life in different degrees
By feeling more or less the eternal Breath.

They showed themselves here, not because allotted
This sphere has been to them, but to give sign
Of the celestial which is least exalted.

To speak thus is adapted to your mind,
Since only through the sense it apprehendeth
What then it worthy makes of intellect.

On this account the Scripture condescends
Unto your faculties, and feet and hands
To God attributes, and means something else ;
And Holy Church under an aspect human
Gabriel and Michael represent to you
And him who made Tobias whole again.

(*Paradiso IV.* 31-48.)

Here we recognize a resemblance to what Swedenborg teaches, not only concerning the descent of angels from higher to lower heavens for purposes of instruction, but also concerning the descent of truths in the Word by means of correspondences from the celestial to the literal sense. Regarding the descent of the Word by its successive adaptations to lower planes of the minds of angels and men, we read in Swedenborg :

“ From the Lord proceed the celestial, the spiritual, and the natural, one after another. That which proceeds from the Divine Love is called celestial and is the Divine Good : that from the Divine Wisdom is called spiritual, and is Divine Truth : and the natural is from both these, and is their combination in the lowest. The angels of the Lord’s celestial kingdom, of whom is the third or highest heaven, are in the Divine proceeding from the Lord which is called celestial, for they are in the good of love from the Lord. Those of the spiritual kingdom, of whom are the second or middle heaven, are in the Divine proceeding from the Lord which is called spiritual, for they are in truths of wisdom from the Lord. But men of the Church in the world are in the Natural Divine

which also proceeds from the Lord. It follows, therefore, that the Divine proceeding from the Lord to its outermost forms descends by three degrees, and is named celestial, spiritual, and natural. The Divine which descends from the Lord to human beings descends through these three degrees, and when it has descended it contains these three degrees in itself. Such is the case with everything divine ; therefore, when it is in its outermost degree it is in its fulness. SUCH IS THE WORD. In its outermost sense this is natural ; in its interior sense it is spiritual ; in its inmost it is celestial ; and in every sense it is Divine !

“ That the Word is such is not apparent in the sense of its letter, which is natural, for the reason that man in the world has heretofore known nothing concerning the heavens, and so has not known what the spiritual is, nor what the celestial : and consequently he has not known the difference between them and the natural ” (*Doctrine concerning the Sacred Scripture*, no. 6).

And of the appearance of the archangels, Swedenborg says :

“ As an entire society is a heaven in less form, so likewise an angel is a heaven in least form : for heaven is not outside an angel, but within him ; for his interiors, which are of his mind, are disposed into the form of heaven, thus for the reception of all things of heaven which are without him. He also receives those things according to the quality of the good which is in him from the Lord : hence an angel is also a heaven.

“ An entire angelic society sometimes appears as one, in the form of an angel ; which also it has been granted to me by the Lord to see. When also the Lord appears in the midst of the angels, He does not then appear encompassed by several, but as one [angel] in angelic form. Thence it is that the Lord in the Word is called an angel ; and also that an entire society is so called.

Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael are only angelic societies, which are so named from their function" (*Heaven and Hell*, nos. 53, 52).

In the "heaven of Mercury" Beatrice unfolds to Dante the doctrine or what she calls the "*Gran Sentenzia*" of the Incarnation, from which I will quote only the following remarkable lines :

By not submitting to the power that wills
 Curb for his good, that man who ne'er was born
 Damning himself damned all his progeny ;
 Whereby the human species down below
 Lay sick for many centuries in great error,
 Till to descend it pleased the Word of God
 To where the nature, which from its own Maker
 Estrayed itself, He joined to Him in person
 By the sole act of His eternal love.

(*Paradiso VII.* 25-34.)

Continuing in this explanation, Beatrice states that after man "by sin had become disfranchised," there remained only two ways by which he could be restored to his pristine dignity and freedom :

Either that God through clemency alone
 Had pardon granted, or that man himself
 Had satisfaction for his folly made.

But inasmuch as man in his limitations has no power to render satisfaction for his sins :

Therefore it God behoved in His own ways
 Man to restore unto his perfect life,—
 I say in one, or else in both of them,

meaning the two ways of justice and mercy :

But since the action of the doer is
 So much more grateful, as it more presents,
 The goodness of the heart from which it issues,
 Goodness Divine, that doth imprint the world,
 Has been contented to proceed by each
 And all Its ways to lift you up again ;
 Nor 'twixt the first day and the final night
 Such high and such magnificent proceeding
 By one or by the other, was or shall be ;
 For God more bounteous was Himself to give
 To make man able to uplift himself
 Than if He only of Himself had pardoned ;
 And all the other modes were insufficient
 For justice, were it not the Son of God
 Himself had humbled to become incarnate.

(*Paradiso VII.* 103.)

This condescension of God to man's estate in order to redeem it is thus stated by Swedenborg in his *Doctrine concerning the Lord* (nos. 29-36) :

"The Lord from eternity who is Jehovah took on Himself a human nature in order to save men : from the Divine in Himself He made the humanity Divine by means of temptations admitted into Himself, the last of which temptations was the passion of the cross. Thus He successively put off the humanity assumed from the mother and put on a humanity from the Divine in Himself, and this is the Divine Human and the 'Son of God.' Thus God became man, as in first principles so in the last and lowest."

u/ It is when among the blessed in the heaven of the son (reckoned at that time as fourth in the order of the planets), that a voice instructs Dante regarding the vesture of light with which the saints are clothed :

—As long as the festivity
 Of Paradise shall be, so long our love
 Shall radiate round about us such a vesture.
 Its brightness is proportioned to the ardour,
 The ardour to the vision ; and the vision
 Equals what grace it has above its worth.

(*Paradiso XIV.* 37-42.)

And it is here that the holy circles or choirs "in their revolving and their wondrous song" so show forth the joy of their life that the poet cries :

Whoso lamenteth him that here we die
 That we may live above, has never there
 Seen the refreshment of the eternal rain.

Here is beautifully expressed not only the truth which the Word utters in saying, "He clothes Himself with light as with a garment," but also the interior truth that it is the inner heat or ardour of love that radiates this light, and that thus furnishes its own substance with a visible form. The power of vision is also said to be equal to the inward reception of Divine grace in accordance with the truth, that all the life, delight, and beauty of the angels is according to their acknowledgment that their life is from the Lord, that is, a "grace above their own worth." Swedenborg thus speaks of the clothing of the angels, and of the spheres of light about them :

"The things which appear before the eyes of angels in the heavens, and are perceived by their senses, appear and are perceived as much to the life, as the things which are on the earth appear to man ; yea, much more clearly,

distinctly, and perceptibly. The appearances which are from this source in the heavens, are called *real appearances*, because they exist really. There are also given appearances not real, which are those things which indeed appear, but do not correspond to the interiors. As angelic wisdom exceeds human wisdom in such a degree that it is called ineffable, so likewise do all things which are perceived by them, and appear to them; since all things which are perceived by the angels, and appear to them, correspond to their wisdom.

"The garments with which angels are clothed, correspond to their intelligence; therefore all in the heavens appear clothed according to intelligence; and because one excels another in intelligence, one has more excellent garments than another. The most intelligent have garments glowing as from flame, some shining as from light; the less intelligent have bright and white garments without brilliancy; and the still less intelligent have garments of various colours; but the angels of the inmost heavens are without clothing.

"Because the garments of the angels correspond to their intelligence, therefore also they correspond to truth, since all intelligence is from Divine Truth; whether therefore you say that angels are clothed according to intelligence, or according to Divine Truth, it is the same thing. That the garments of some glow as from flame, and those of others shine as from light, is because flame corresponds to good, and light to truth from good. That the garments of some are bright and white without brilliancy, and those of others of various colours, is because the Divine Good and Truth are less refulgent, and also are variously received, with the less intelligent: brightness also, and whiteness correspond to truth, and colour to its varieties. That those in the inmost heaven are without clothing, is because they are in innocence, and innocence corresponds to nudity" (*Heaven and Hell*, nos. 175, 177, 178).

The doctrine of the Divine operation from centre

to circumference is thus expressed by Dante, in the course of a discussion in the planet Jupiter regarding the Divine justice and the fate of the heathen :

The primal Will, that in Itself is good
 Ne'er from itself, the Good Supreme, has moved.
 So much is just as is accordant with It :
 No good created draws It to itself
 But It, by raying forth, occasions that
 Unto this kingdom never
 Ascended one who had not faith in Christ
 Before or since He to the tree was nailed.
 But look thou, many crying are, "Christ, Christ !"
 Who at the judgment shall be far less near
 To Him than some shall be who knew not Christ.
 Such Christians shall the Ethiop condemn,
 When the two companies shall be divided,
 The one forever rich, the other poor.

(*Paradiso XIX.* 86-III.)

Regarding the salvation of the heathen, and especially of the African race, Swedenborg thus writes :

"That the Gentiles are saved as well as Christians, those may know who know what it is which makes heaven with man ; for heaven is in man, and those who have heaven in themselves come into heaven. Heaven in man is to acknowledge the Divine, and to be led by the Divine. The first and primary thing of every religion is, to acknowledge a Divine. A religion which does not acknowledge a Divine, is not a religion ; and the precepts of every religion have respect to worship, thus they teach how the Divine is to be worshipped, so that the worship may be acceptable to Him ; and when this is fixed in one's mind, thus as far as he wills it, or as far as he loves it, so far he is led by the Lord. It is known that the

Gentiles live a moral life as well as Christians, and that many of them live a better life than Christians.

"I have been instructed on many occasions, that the Gentiles who have led a moral life and in obedience and subordination, and have lived in mutual charity according to their religion, and have thence received something of conscience, are accepted in the other life, and are there instructed with solicitous care by angels, in the goods and truths of faith; and that when they are being instructed, they behave themselves modestly, intelligently, and wisely, and easily receive truths, and are imbued with them. They have formed to themselves no principles of falsity contrary to the truths of faith, which are to be shaken off, still less scandals against the Lord, like many Christians, who cherish no other idea of Him than as of a common man. The Gentiles, on the contrary, when they hear that God became Man, and thus manifested Himself in the world, immediately acknowledge and adore the Lord, saying that God has fully manifested Himself because He is the God of heaven and of earth, and because the human race are His. It is a Divine Truth, that without the Lord there is no salvation; but this is to be understood thus, that there is no salvation but from the Lord. There are in the universe many earths, and all full of inhabitants, of whom scarcely any know that the Lord assumed the Human in our earth. Yet because they adore the Divine under a human form, they are accepted and led of the Lord. Among the Gentiles in heaven, the Africans are most beloved, for they receive the goods and truths of heaven more easily than others. They wish especially to be called obedient, but not faithful; they say that Christians, because they have the doctrine of faith, may be called faithful, but not they, unless they receive the doctrine, or, as they say, are able to receive it" (*Heaven and Hell*, nos. 319, 321, 326).

In his ascent into the higher heavens, Dante is examined in succession by St. Peter as to his faith,

by St. James as to his hope, and by St. John as to his love. In his confession of faith there occurs this singular expression, reminding one strongly of Swedenborg's use of the singular verb with a plural subject when the two subjects are distinctly one, like love and wisdom, or *esse* and *existere*. The poet believes in three eternal persons, and these—

One essence, I believe, so one and trine,
They bear conjunction both with *sunt* and *est*.

(*Paradiso XXIV.* 140.)

Compare this with Swedenborg's mode of expression in his work *Sapientia Angelica de Divino Amore* :

"Quod Divinus Amor et Divina Sapientia sit substantia et forma, mox confirmatum est . . . Quia ipsa illa substantia et forma est Divinus Amor et Divina Sapientia, sequitur quod sit ipse et unicus amor ac ipsa et unica sapientia, consequenter quod sit ipsa et unica essentia, tum ipsa et unica vita, nam amor et sapientia est vita" (nos. 44, 45).

Dante's confession of his love, in answer to the inquiry of St. John the evangelist, begins thus :

The good, that gives contentment in this court,
The Alpha and Omega is of all
The writing that love reads me low or loud.

For good, so far as good, when comprehended
Doth straight enkindle love and so much greater
As more of goodness in itself it holds.
Then to that Essence (whose is such advantage
That every good which out of It is found
Is nothing but a ray of Its own light)
More than else whither must the mind be moved
Of every one in loving, who discerns
The truth in which this evidence is founded.

The voice reveals it of the truthful Author,
Who says to Moses, speaking of Himself,
"I will make all My goodness pass before thee."
Thou, too, revealest it to me, beginning
The loud evangel that proclaims the secret
Of heaven and earth above all other edict.

Here Dante evidently refers to the opening of
St. John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the
Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word
was God;" and then he concludes:

The being of the world, and my own being,
The death which He endured that I may live,
And that which all the faithful hope, as I do,
With the forementioned vivid consciousness,
Have drawn me from the sea of love perverse,
And of the night have placed me on the shore.
The leaves wherewith embowered is all the garden
Of the Eternal Gardener, do I love
As much as He has granted them of good.

That is to say that true love loves even the truth
not for its own sake but for the good which is in it;
and then the poet continues:

As soon as I had ceased, a song most sweet
Throughout the heaven resounded, and my Lady
Said with the others, "Holy, holy, holy!"

(Paradiso XXVI. 16-69.)

The emanation of creative spheres from the
Divine Love in the beginning, and thus the creation
of the universe, not from nothing but from itself,
by discrete degrees of proceeding, is thus beauti-

fully outlined by Beatrice's instruction to Dante in the twenty-ninth canto :

Not to acquire some good unto Himself,
Which is impossible, but that his splendour
In its resplendency may say "*Subsisto !*"
In His eternity outside of time,
Outside all other limits, as it pleased Him,
Into new loves the Eternal Love unfolded.

Of this unfolding of heaven and of all life out of the Divine Love, Swedenborg writes :

"The Divine proceeding from the Lord is called in heaven Divine Truth. This Divine Truth flows into heaven from the Lord out of His Divine Love. Divine Love, and thence Divine Truth, are comparatively as the fire of the sun and the light thence, in the world ; love as the fire of the sun, and truth thence as light from the sun. From correspondence also fire signifies love, and light the truth thence proceeding. Thence it may be evident, what the Divine Truth proceeding from the Divine Love of the Lord is, that it is in its essence Divine Good conjoined to Divine Truth ; and because it is conjoined, it vivifies all things of heaven, as the heat of the sun conjoined to light in the world fructifies all things of the earth, as in the time of spring and summer. It is otherwise when heat is not conjoined to light, thus when the light is cold ; then all things are torpid, and lie without life. The Divine Good, which is compared to heat, is the good of love with the angels, and the Divine Truth, which is compared to light, is that by which and from which is the good of love.

"That the Divine in heaven, which makes heaven, is love, is because love is spiritual conjunction ; it conjoins angels to the Lord, and it conjoins them one with another ; and it so conjoins, that they are all as one in the sight of the Lord. Moreover, love is the very *esse* of life to every

one, hence from it an angel has life, and also man has life. That from love is the inmost vital [principle] of man, every one may know who considers; for from the presence of it he grows warm, from the absence of it he grows cold, and from the privation of it he dies. But it is to be known that the life of every one is such as his love is" (*Heaven and Hell*, nos. 13, 14).

And of the infinite multiplying of angelic forms according to the various modes of reception of the Divine life, we read :

This nature doth so multiply itself
In numbers, that there never yet was speech
Nor mortal fancy that can go so far.
And if thou notest that which is revealed
By Daniel, thou wilt see that in his thousands
Number determinate is kept concealed.
The primal Light that all irradiates it
By modes as many is received therein,
As are the splendours wherewith It is mated.

The height behold now and the amplitude
Of the eternal Power, since it hath made
Itself so many mirrors, where 'tis broken,
One in Itself remaining as before.

(*Paradiso XXIX.* 130.)

It is from hence that the poet now mounts up in his final flight to the blessed vision of the Divine Light in its various forms, as of a river and of sparks thence issuing, and of the flowers upon its banks; of the lake and the rose and the angelic bees of which we read :

—the other host, that flying sees and sings
The glory of Him who doth enamour it,
And the goodness that created it so noble,

Even as a swarm of bees that sinks in flowers
 One moment and the next returns again
 To where its labour is to sweetness turned,
 Sank into the great flower, that is adorned
 With leaves so many, and thence reascended
 To where its love abideth evermore.
 Their faces had they all of living flame
 And wings of gold, and all the rest so white
 No snow unto that limit doth attain.

Then the poet beholds his Beatrice enthroned,
 and the "faithful Bernard," and Mary the mother
 of our Lord,* the spheres of blessed infants, the
 angels and archangels, and finally thus he tells, "as
 best he may," of his crowning vision of the Incarnate
 God :

Not because more than one unmingled substance
 Was in the living Light on which I looked,
 For It was always what It was before,
 But through the sight, that fortified itself
 In me, by looking, one appearance only
 To me was ever changing as I changed.

Within the deep and luminous subsistence
 Of the High Light appeared to me Three Circles
 Of threefold colour and of one dimension,
 And by the Second seemed the First reflected.
 As Iris is by Iris, and the Third
 Seemed Fire that equally from Both is breathed.

* Compare this with Swedenborg's reverent and impressive
 mention of what he calls a most memorable event : *hoc dignissimum* :

"MARY THE MOTHER OF THE LORD once passed y and
 appeared above my head in white raiment ; there she pused a
 moment and said that she was the mother of the Lord, that he was
 indeed born of her, but that being made God He had put off all the
 humanity which He had from her ; so that now she worship Him
 as her God, and is unwilling that any one should acknowledg Him
 as her son since all in Him is Divine" (*True Christian Religion*,
 no. 827).

That Circulation, which being thus conceived
 Appeared in Thee as a reflected Light
 When somewhat contemplated by mine eyes,
Within Itself, of Its own very colour,
 Seemed to me painted with our effigy,
 Wherefore my sight was all absorbed therein.

Here the poet is referring to the Divine Humanity of the Lord as bearing the image of our nature, and being the object of our sight. Compare Swedenborg's sublime statement of this truth :

"All the angels in the heavens never perceive the Divine under any other form but the human ; and what is wonderful, those who are in the superior heavens cannot think otherwise of the Divine. They are brought into that necessity of thinking, from the Divine itself which flows in, and also from the form of heaven, according to which their thoughts extend themselves around : for every thought which the angels have, has extension into heaven, and according to that extension they have intelligence and wisdom. Hence it is that all there acknowledge the Lord, because the Divine Human is given only in Him. These things have not only been told me by the angels, but it has also been given me to perceive them, when elevated into the interior sphere of heaven. Hence it is manifest, that the wiser the angels are, the more clearly they perceive this ; and hence it is, that the Lord appears to them : for the Lord appears in a Divine angelic form, which is the human, to those who acknowledge and believe in a visible Divine, but not to those who acknowledge and believe in an invisible Divine ; for the former can see their Divine, but the latter cannot " (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 79).

I wished to see how the Image to the Circle
Conformed Itself, and how It there finds place ;
But my own wings were not enough for this,
Had it not been that then my mind there smote
A flash of lightning, wherein came its wish.
Here vigour failed the lofty fantasy,
But now was turning my desire and will,
Even as a wheel that equally is moved,
The Love which moves the sun and other stars.

(*Paradiso XXXIII.* 109-145.)

Thus ends the *Divina Commedia* in the acquiescence of the poet's own with the Divine central will of the universe, so that he is content with the shortcoming of his own endeavour to fully comprehend the Divine Being and His being made Man, since the all-guiding Love so rules.

In these extracts from the great Italian epic I think the reader will see how, with the elevation of the subject, the poet's own mind seems to become itself elevated, refined, and illumined, and into what wisdom almost angelic, and into what beatific visions of heaven his prophetic intuitions admitted him. The poem remains a poem and a poem only, but in the light of the doctrines we now enjoy, we see how many deep truths lie here imbedded, truths which could heretofore be only half received, as ingenious fancies and daring guesses, but which now not only shine with the clear and holy light that revelation alone can give, but may remain for our delight still enclosed in all the rich and varied setting which the language of the poet has given them.

My thought in conducting my readers through this comparative study of Dante and Swedenborg has been not to prove Dante a prophet, even though he spoke often wiser than he knew, but to show the unity of truth, and the power of revealed truth, to vivify and reduce to order and beauty all the otherwise dead and inert fragments of the true that lie scattered here and there in the wide realms of our knowledge, whether of nature, art, or literature. It is spiritual truth that quickens all knowledge; and even Dante, wide as is his repute and lofty his place among the great poets of the world, must yet come to be read and studied with higher enjoyment, truer appreciation, and more profit by those who can read him in the light afforded by Swedenborg, than he has ever yet been by even his warmest admirers and profoundest commentators.

FLORENCE, ITALY, 1889.

"THE SPIRITUAL SENSE OF DANTE."*

A REVIEW.

IN view of the materialistic tendency of thought prevailing at the present time, it is encouraging to find a public writer recognizing a "spiritual sense" in anything; but when the writer is one who holds the position of Dr. Harris, among the deeper thinkers of our time and country, and his topic the great religious poem of Latin Christianity, the "spiritual sense," so inquired into, becomes a subject of more than ordinary interest.

In the brief but very complete and in every way interesting treatise by Dr. Harris, on "The Spiritual Sense of Dante's *Divina Commedia*," we have a new interpretation added to the long catalogue of the explanations of Dante, dating from the poet's own statement of the four ways in which a poem is to be understood: "There is in a poem a literal, an allegorical, a moral, and a mystical sense" (Dante's *Convito*, Ch. I.). But it is in neither of these senses that the new interpretation here offered us consists. Rather we must call this of Dr. Harris the philo-

* "The Spiritual Sense of Dante's *Divina Commedia*," by W. T. Harris [United States Commissioner of Education]. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1889.

sophic interpretation, or that of the ground or the "supreme principle," in the knowledge of which consists, according to our reviewer, the "angelic knowing" itself, as well as the genuine poetic and prophetic faculty.

The "spiritual sense" which the writer here discovers, is that which is grounded in philosophy. "The *Divina Commedia*," he says, "may be justly claimed to have a spiritual sense, for it possesses a philosophic system and admits of allegorical interpretation. It is *par excellence* the religious poem of the world. And religion, like philosophy, deals directly with a first principle of the universe, while like poetry it clothes its universal ideas in the garb of special events and situations, making them types and hence symbols of the kind which may become allegories."

Any poem that "exhibits a supreme principle operating in the affairs of a world, and hence exhibits a philosophy realized or incarnated," as it were "under the form of events and situations chosen to be universal types," may be said to have a "spiritual sense." The discovery of this spiritual sense therefore must belong only to philosophic insight, or to the mind capable of apprehending these first principles of things. But the poet's insight reaches farther than any formulated system of philosophy, and the "art structure of the poem reveals a deeper spiritual sense than is covered by the Allegory." This art structure grows out of the poet's nationality, in Dante's case the

Roman, as distinguished from the Hebrew and the Greek.

The Hebrew discovers the highest principle through the emotions of the heart; the Greek realizes it intellectually, as the pure or essential Form; the Roman experiences it as will or volition. We would say, rather, as the act in which both the will and the intellect find the outmost expression and power. According to the view which regards the absolute first principle as Will, each being, in acting, acts upon itself and thereby becomes its own fate. It creates its environment. The responsibility of the free agent is infinite. And here follows the interpretation, in the briefest form, of the deep ethical meaning of Dante's poem, as based, according to the author, on this poetic intuition of the supreme principle as will.

"If the will of the free agent acts so as to make for itself an environment of deeds that are in harmony with its freedom, it lives in the 'Paradiso.' If it acts so as to contradict its nature, it makes for itself the 'Inferno.'

"As the individual man by his will creates an environment through society, therefore his deeds are to be judged by their effect upon society, whether they reinforce the freedom of others, or curtail that freedom."

It is in Christianity that the perfect freedom and perfect responsibility of man is recognized, and this is done in the Church's Doctrine of Hell as that of the complete return of the deed upon the doer.

"A man can conjoin himself to the social whole or can sunder himself from it. He can on the one hand

mediate himself through all men, placing his personal interest at the most distant part of the universe, and seeking his own good through first serving the interest of all others; or he can seek his selfish interest directly, and before that of all others, and in preference to theirs. Thus he can make for himself one of two utterly different worlds, an Inferno or a Paradiso."

It is on entering hell that Virgil informs Dante that here dwell the wretched people who have lost the "good of the intellect," meaning, according to Aristotle's doctrine of the highest good, the vision of absolute Truth and Goodness. The wicked do not see God. To them He seems an external tyrant, oppressing them and inflicting pain on them. They are conquered but not obedient. "This state is hell, and even this is the evidence of Divine love when rightly understood."

"Were God a formless abyss, as in the Oriental idea, all finite being would be lost in Him, and all rebellion or imperfection would constitute annihilation. But with a Christian idea of God as pure Form the finite can subsist as real and true substance, and God in protecting the absolute free-will of the individual gives him immortal existence, even in hell. Hell is the alienation from God, but not annihilation. It arose with the creating of finite things and their limitations, and it will exist as long as the finite is created—that is eternally.

"Before me [says the inscription over the gate of hell] were no things created, but eternal: and eternal to endure. . . . Hell therefore signifies the continuance of free-will, supported by Divine Grace. . . . It is a state of rebellion against the Divine world—order; the individual seeks his selfish good before the good of his fellow-men and instead of their good. Accordingly he

wills that humanity shall be his enemies. . . . The contradiction hence arising exists in the shape of pain and hellish torment.

"The sinner is in hell because he looks upon his own pain, not as produced by his own freedom, but as thrust upon him undeservedly from without. . . . Could he see that his pain comes from his own act of freedom, from his opposition to the social whole, then he would welcome pain as the evidence of his own substantial participation in his race and in the Divine Being. Then he would be at once in purgatory, and all his pain would become purifying instead of hardening to his soul. . . . In purgatory the individual looks upon society as the centre and measure, and strives to rid himself of his selfishness. He struggles against the lusts of the flesh and the pride and envy of his soul. Such lusts and passions now seem to him horrible when they arise within him, and this is the torment of purgatory. In purgatory all pain and inconvenience, all the ills of the flesh and of the soul are made means of purification, means of conquest over selfishness."

I have quoted thus abundantly from Dr. Harris to illustrate what he means by the art structure of Dante's poem. This consists of the threefold world of will exercise: man at enmity with society and suffering from the evil without, the state of hell; man at enmity with himself and suffering from the evil recognized as from within, or from the absence of his own freedom, the state of purgatory; finally, man at peace with himself and with his fellow-man, which is heaven. In the second—the purgatory—we see the struggles endured in the spiritual temptation; the being faithful unto death in the hope and confidence of final victory. In the last

the final victory and peace of heaven itself. Thus the poem is eminently the Christian epic ; it is the great poem of salvation—of the restoration of man to the true *salus*, health, or the Divine order of things. That the ordinary reader would see, in the various scenes depicted by Dante in hell and in purgatory, the representation of these deep-lying principles is not to be supposed. The question might arise whether, as philosophically-defined principles, the poet himself ever saw them, and whether, therefore, they are not read into the poem by the philosophic insight of the interpreter. There would be nothing in the latter supposition inconsistent with the true "spiritual sense" of the poem, provided the characters and scenes introduced are such as really belong to the hells and to the intermediate and the heavenly worlds ; for, given any fact of nature or of humanity, which is true in its own plane, it must contain depths of spiritual meaning far outreaching any knowledge possessed by the narrator of the fact itself. In seeing, therefore, the spiritual meaning of Dante, Dr. Harris is really penetrating not so much into the poet's individual meaning as into the Divine meaning itself of the great facts of an eternal hell, an intermediate world, and a heaven. These he interprets according to the philosophic system which he sees underlying all Christianity. It is interesting to read Dr. Harris's description of the change which his own feeling toward the man Dante undergoes, regarding him first as "more of a fiend than a man,"

and at length "struck with the apt correspondence between the punishments of the 'Inferno' and the actual state of mind of the sinner on committing the sin." The conviction arises that Dante has done nothing arbitrary—that what seemed at first "his fertility of genius in inventing external, physical symbols for the expression of internal states of the soul," proves to be only the poet's deep sense of justice and truth to what he has actually observed in the world about him. Thence we come to recognize "the tenderness and divine charity of this world-poet and see his loving-kindness in the very instances in which we at first could see only malignant spite or heartless cruelty."

More than this could hardly be said of the Word itself as the Creative Logos, or true World Poet, and we find it difficult to see wherein Dr. Harris draws a line between Dante's poem and Revelation itself. Perhaps he means, indeed, to draw no such line, but would regard both the Italian poem and the Christian Scriptures as alike the self-revealings of the Supreme Reason or Absolute Idea in the consciousness of the human mind.

The "angelic knowing" is according to Dante that of "pure illumination;" while to men it is accorded to know "by means of the symbolism involved in objects perceptible by the senses." The progress of human knowledge is, according to Dr. Harris, from that of the classification of facts to that of laws, and finally to the knowledge of principles or energies acting in the form of laws. Sweden-

borg defines it as progress through the three stages or degrees of: knowledge (*scientia*), intelligence, and wisdom ; and as contemplating in these, respectively : effects, causes, and ends. Thus in the *Divine Love and Wisdom*, no. 202, he says: "To think from ends is of wisdom: to think from causes is of intelligence: to think from effects is of science."

"Could a man become," says Dr. Harris, "so well acquainted with principles as to habitually make his knowledge a deduction from first principles, he would then know by 'pure illumination' as angels are said to know." In the passage of Dante to which Dr. Harris refers for illustration of this knowing, we do not see defined, although it may be symbolized, this deduction from first principles. What Dante actually says is in correction of those who have asserted that the angels "can hear, recollect, and will ;" and he would describe, in its purity, that truth which men on earth see and teach only confusedly :

These substances [the angels] since in God's countenance
They jocund were, turned not away their sight
From that wherefrom not anything is hidden ;
Hence they have not their vision intercepted
By object new, and hence they do not need
To recollect, through interrupted thought.
So that, below, people do dream, awake,
Believing they speak truth, and not believing,
And in the last is greater sin and shame.
Below you do not journey in one path,
Philosophizing : so transporteth you
Love of appearance and the thought thereof.

And even this, above here, is endured
 With less disdain, than when is set aside
 The Holy Writ, or when it is distorted.
 They think not there how much of blood it costs
 To sow it in the world, and how he pleases
 Who in humility keeps close to it.
 Each striveth for appearance and doth make
 His own inventions : and these treated are
 By preachers, while th' Evangel holds its peace.

(*Paradiso XXIX.* 76-96.)

Any one will find here a suggestion of the passage of the Word where are described the "pure in heart who see God," and the little children "whose angels do always behold the face of My Father in heaven," and of those things which are "hidden from the wise and prudent, but are revealed unto babes," and especially when by these infantile states, are understood, as Swedenborg explains, the innocence of the third or celestial degree of the angelic heavens. The angelic and human knowing is described by Swedenborg as progressing through three discrete planes or degrees—the natural, which is knowledge of effects and appearances of truth ; the spiritual, which is knowledge of causes or the spiritual laws controlling all natural phenomena ; the celestial, which is knowledge of ends, or what Dr. Harris calls the first principles. Swedenborg says of the several planes of the angelic knowledge :

"The thoughts of the angels of the highest or third heaven are thoughts of ends, those of the second heaven are those of causes, those of the lowest or first heaven

are those of effects. . . . The angels of the lower heavens think about causes and about ends ; the angels of the higher heavens think from causes and from ends " (*Divine Love and Wisdom*, no. 202).

The progress from the thinking from appearances, such as Dante describes as belonging to the lower or natural plane, to the thinking from ends which belongs to those "who rejoice in their unchanging view of God's face," finds illustration in the contrast drawn by Dr. Harris between the seeming cruelty of the hells when regarded purely as effect, or as ultimated in suffering and pain, and the mercy which is implied in their permission when viewed from the ends of Divine love in creating and preserving the freedom of man. As to the means of attaining this angelic knowledge of ends, or immediate vision of truth in first principles, Dr. Harris seems to restrict this to the philosophic order of minds, or to admit, if any others, only the poets into the ranks of those enjoying this pure illumination. It does not appear from this treatise whether the author regards the Word as the source itself of such illumination, or whether the life of regeneration in accordance with the revealed Word is the path into this highest light. He speaks, indeed, of this highest wisdom as being the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who are of the Church, but he seems to use these terms in the Hegelian philosophic sense rather than in the strictly religious sense—the Holy Spirit being, according to Hegel, the Absolute Idea or the

Supreme Reason realizing Itself objectively in the kingdom of God or the invisible Church. In this infinite, immortal Church man reaches perfection and the knowledge of the highest truth, but as philosophy, and not as religion or objective revelation ; for religion, according to Hegel, is the truth in the form of mental representation or imagination, probably as the myth, while philosophy is the thinking of absolute truth, or the true in the form of truth. Dr. Harris says that this, according to Dante, is revealed and knowable :

Well I perceive that never sated is
Our intellect unless the Truth illumine it
Beyond which nothing true expands itself.
It rests therein as wild beast in his lair
When it attains it ; and it can attain it :
If not, then each desire would frustrate be.

(*Paradiso IV.* 124.)

"And it can attain it"! Dante was, then, no agnostic. Not only to him was that "Truth beyond which nothing true expands itself" attainable, but without it the ideal human life itself would perish, for "each desire would frustrate be." It is not of the humble, patient agnosticism which limits its denial to the confession, "I do not know," while still holding the eyes lifted to where the Light shall shine, that this desire is spoken, but rather of that denial of the possibility of Divine revelation which is contained in the arbitrary but persistent assumption, "I *can* not know." This is what cuts the chain of lifting desire, that which destroys the

faith-principle ; which blots out that "wisdom which is the knowledge of ends, and that intelligence which is the knowledge of causes," and leaves the mind the blinded victim to the pseudo-science which "knows" only effects. Of this kind of agnosticism and its fatal effect upon the whole interior structure of the mind, Swedenborg says in the *Spiritual Diary*:

"The majority of these are such as have thought in the world—when they heard from preaching, or came into any thought from the speech of another, and seemed to be vanquished by some reason which they could not gainsay—that, whether it is or is not true, they do not know ; whether there is a God, whether there is a heaven, whether there is faith, whether such things as belong to the Church ; (saying to themselves,) 'I might easily believe them if I were to see them in another life—if I come thither ;' supposing that they will believe if they see for certain or hear for certain. But this by no means happens. *They who have not faith when in the world, do not have faith in the other life.* I have spoken with such ones ; and they were convicted of being in error. They seized upon the truth. And when they turned the face to me they believed. But immediately they turn themselves to their own loves, or turn themselves away from me to themselves, then they are instantly in the like faith to that in which they were in the world and altogether against those things which they have heard. *Nor are they any longer able to be led to the truths of faith :* for the whole interior intellectual life is from these principles : wherefore to be so led would be to destroy that life" (no. 5659).

As to the manner by which this angelic knowing or contemplation of the truth is attainable, both reve-

lation and philosophy are named as the available means to this end. But according to Dr. Harris these means are not co-ordinate ; philosophy is the prior and chief, and religion the secondary and instrumental means. Or we may better say that, as philosophy, this knowledge of the truth is the self-thinking of pure reason, rather than the contemplation of a Divine revelation to the finite mind. Dr. Harris speaks of the "world view of Christianity" as that of "nature and human history as a revelation of Divine reason." To him Beatrice is the symbol at once of Divine knowledge, Christian theology, or revelation, and so of philosophy, because all these mean "the insight into a Divine Reason as First Cause," and as "Reason is Divine Human" the contemplation of this is the "vision of God" (p. 112). But the doctrine of the Logos, or the Word, and of the operation of these both in creation and redemption as well as that of the Holy Spirit or "the institutional Spirit" (p. 135), are traced by Dr. Harris from Aristotle and Plato down through the Alexandrian mysticism to St. John and St. Paul. The redemption and the Redeemer of the Gospels seem therefore to be the *mythos*, which is the representative, symbolic, and religious form of the absolute truth, rather than the truth itself. Christianity seems to be evolved from philosophy rather than philosophy from Christianity as itself the highest and fullest Divine revelation, the "Word made Flesh in whom we behold the Only-Begotten of the Father full of grace and

truth." Of the evolution or self-development of the Logos, Dr. Harris says :

"In religious symbolism He is spoken of as redeeming finite beings through His incarnation and death on the cross. This expresses symbolically the act of the Logos in creation" (p. 138).

Thus the redemption of man through the overthrowing of the dominion of the hells by Jesus Christ in His warfare in our flesh and in the glorifying of His Humanity, becomes, apparently, only one of the forms of that *mythos* or religious symbolism which poets use to convey the truths of the highest wisdom revealed to their philosophy. In the same way the *mythos* of the three worlds—hell, purgatory, and heaven—are traced down from Homer, through Plato and Virgil to Dante, and in this way this world poem is represented as the sensuous or representative form in which the Divine idea embodies itself in the conceptions of art, religion, and philosophy. Singularly, in all this, the fundamental ground of Dante's great poem is set aside to make way for the Hegelian interpretation of it. The ground of Dante's theology is the Revelation of the Christian Scriptures and the traditions of the Catholic Church. If in their literal form these revelations are symbolic, it is the Divine Word itself, and neither Homer nor Plato, that has dictated the choice of symbols, and so an infinite truth lies within them.

Such is the teaching of Swedenborg, who in giving the "spiritual sense" of the Word claims to

give not the self-revealing of his own reason, but revelations vouchsafed to him by God Himself; equally in his visions of the hells, of the intermediate world, and of heaven, Swedenborg declares that all that he saw was truly symbolic or representative, corresponding exactly to the interior qualities and states of spirits and angels there. These representatives resulted from the very law of spiritual creation itself, or the correspondence existing between cause and effect, between the spiritual and the natural worlds. The "spiritual sense" of the Word, or of any symbol or representation grounded in the Divine law of correspondence, means therefore the truth of the spiritual world or world of causes lying within the truth as it "appears" in the world of nature or of literal revelation. The angels and spirits in the spiritual world are in these higher truths, and therefore perceive the vast number and the vast reach of truths which are contained within each literal truth of the Word. Those angels are in the knowledge of Divine ends which are nearest God, or are in the celestial or highest heavens; they are therefore in the deepest senses of the truth embodied in the letter of holy Scripture, but their attainment of the highest knowledge is not a process of philosophizing, but the result of the real illumination which is given in heaven to those who see God, that is to the pure in heart. In Swedenborg the Lord and the Word stand first as the sources of revelation itself, and the elementary principles of the spiritual rational faculty.

These and the knowledge of the spiritual world *ex visis et auditis*, are the elementary but inductive knowledges, to be "learned from without," from which as the basis of a great Divine science, the deductive principles of a true philosophy are to be obtained. With these fixed knowledges of the true, because Divinely given, symbols, we need "not go by various paths in our philosophizing," as we are sure to do if we accept as the symbols of truth every imagining of the poet, and every vagary of Christian dogmatists. In this case it has too often happened that

Each striveth for appearance, and doth make
Its own inventions ; but these treated are
By preachers, and the Gospel holds its peace !

What we find fault with, therefore, in Dr. Harris, is not his regarding all literal revelation as in a sense symbolical or representative, for this must be the case. Swedenborg says :

"By means of his natural mind being elevated into the light of heaven, a man can think with the angels, yea, speak with them ; but the thought and speech of the angels then flow into the natural thought and speech of the man, and not contrariwise. Human wisdom can by no means be elevated into angelic wisdom, but only into a certain image of it" (*Divine Love and Wisdom*, no. 257).

But the defect lies in there being no apparent line of demarcation between the Divine and revealed symbolism of the Word and the arbitrary symbolism of the poets and the philosophers as such. If these

latter are true, we would trace them not to the general intuitive power of the human reason, but to a Divine source in some special earlier revelation. To the existence of such earlier revelations of the supernatural world to the human race, in ages prehistoric, but which have yielded, through various channels, their contributions to what may seem now the natural inheritance of the human reason, Mr. Gladstone alludes in an article cited elsewhere in this volume :

. . . . "It is of the deepest interest to examine whether in any and what particulars, now recognized by Christians as undoubted portions of revealed truth, those religions (of the Assyrians and Egyptians) were more advanced and more enlarged than the religion of the favoured race. . . . No doubt if it be found that these extraneous and independent religions taught in any point more fully than the Hebrews what Christians now acknowledge, this will be for Christians a new and striking proof that, in the infancy of the race of Adam, and before its distribution over the earth, the Almighty imparted to it precious knowledges which it could hardly have discovered and was but indifferently able to retain."

Swedenborg did not invent the punishments of the hells or the paradises of heaven from any imagination of his own. He beheld these things as real creations not of his imagining, but as created by the one Creator. Speaking of objects seen about the angels in heaven, Swedenborg says :

"All these things exist according to the affections and thence the thoughts of the angels, for they are correspon-

dences ; and because things that correspond make one with that to which they correspond, they are therefore an image representative of it. . . . They do not exist around the man-angel from the angel, but from the Lord through the angel ; for they exist from the influx of the Divine Love and Wisdom of the Lord into the angel who is a recipient, and before whose sight it is all produced like the creation of a universe !” (*Divine Love and Wisdom*, nos. 322, 326).

It might look indeed as if this kind of creation were identical with that which the Hegelians ascribe to the Divine reason, and which is the source, according to Dr. Harris, of the myths in the great world poets, and so of the visions which Dante describes. The supreme reason operating through the poet's mind produces thus its mythical, symbolic world. But the defect that seems to belong to this conception is, that the object thus created is but a myth, having its existence only in the human consciousness or contemplation, and not in substantial reality or fact. The symbolic myths, however true and admirable, would seem to leave us, if we read Dr. Harris aright, without any actual heaven, hell, or intermediate world, as the sure destination of himself and ourselves, to be reached by us in a few years from now ; and equally without any actual historic incarnation of Deity in the person of Jesus Christ, and so any actual battles fought by Him with the hells for our deliverance from the power of accumulated evil will—without any written revelation, and without any visible Church. In place of these as facts the Hegelian

philosophy seems to content itself with the contemplation of them as ideas or representations created in the imaginations of the human mind, or as what Swedenborg designates as merely an *ens rationis*, having no ultimation in the plane of actual effect. To inquire into the spiritual sense of things that are, or actually have been, is to make a step forward in our learning ; but to find a spiritual sense in things that have no being but as fictions of the reason in human imaginations, can add but little of practical value to our stock of information.

Dante's mention of the angels as those who "happy in God's countenance turn never away," reminds one of Swedenborg's statement in *Heaven and Hell*, that "the reigning love is the origin of all determinations with angels and spirits, and as this love is constantly before their faces, and the face exists from the interiors, therefore that love which reigns is always before their face," and whichever way they turn "the East is ever before their eyes—the whole heaven turning itself toward the Lord as its common centre." Also in the *Divine Providence* (no. 29), he says: "All the angels turn their faces to the Lord, but not of themselves, but the Lord turns them to Himself through an influx into their life's love, and so into their perceptions and thoughts." As to the superiority of the angelic wisdom, Swedenborg says, "It is so ineffable, that only one of a thousand ideas in the thought of the angels from their wisdom, can come into the thought of men from their wisdom."

As to the means of attaining this wisdom, therefore, far from its being the result of philosophizing, Swedenborg declares that no one can come into this ineffable wisdom of the angels except through conjunction with the Lord and according to it. "The angels can receive such great wisdom because they are devoid of self-love, and being without this, the heavenly loves in which they are, open the interiors, because these loves are from the Lord, and in them is the Lord Himself" (*Heaven and Hell*, no. 271).

How ineffable is angelic wisdom may be illustrated by Swedenborg's statement that, "In one angelic word there are innumerable things that cannot be expressed at all in the words of human language, for in each word that angels speak there are arcana of wisdom in a continuous connection to which human sciences never attain" (*Ibid.*, 269). And although in heaven "all long for wisdom and have an appetite for it, yet the infinite or the perfect wisdom is never attained," for although "the angels are continually being perfected in wisdom, still to eternity they cannot be so far perfected that there can be any proportion between their wisdom and the Divine wisdom of the Lord" (*Ibid.*, 273). Man may therefore forever approach but never attain to the perfect reason; at the same time from the revelation of the Divine end or principle, even man in his humblest estate on earth may see earthly and temporal things in the light of heaven and of the eternal wisdom.

It is not through the intuitions of reason, but by saintly guidance and the great light of Christian theology, that Dante acknowledges, in the last canto of the *Paradiso*, that he has been led to the vision of the Supreme Good and True which calls forth this rapturous song of adoration :

O Light Supreme, that dost so far uplift thee
 From the conceits of mortals, to my mind
 Of what thou didst appear re-lend a little,
 And make my tongue of so great puissance,
 That but a single sparkle of thy glory
 It may bequeath unto the future people ;
 For by returning to my memory somewhat,
 And by a little sounding in these verses,
 More of thy victory shall be conceived !
 I think the keenness of the living ray
 Which I endured would have bewildered me,
 If but mine eyes had been averted from it ;
 And I remember that I was more bold
 On this account to bear, so that I joined
 My aspect with the Glory Infinite.
 O grace abundant, by which I presumed
 To fix my sight upon the Light Eternal,
 So that the seeing I consumed therein !
 I saw that in its depth far down is lying,
 Bound up with love together in one volume
 What through the universe in leaves is scattered ;
 Substance, and accident, and their operations,
 All interfused together in such wise
 That what I speak of is one simple Light.

(*Paradiso XXXIII.* 67-90.)

GREEK PHILOSOPHY IN ITS RELATION TO THE LORD'S FIRST ADVENT.

ONE of the most profound as well as universal themes treated of in the writings of Swedenborg is the relation of the will and the intellect, and the modifications they mutually undergo in the progress of man's regeneration. The intellectual and voluntary principles of the mind are shown to be as fundamental to our life, spiritually, as are the respiratory and circulatory principles of our physiological nature to our bodily life ; and the complete solution of all the problems of human anatomy is declared to be contained in a true knowledge of the form, functions, and relations of these two principles of the human mind. As man is a microcism, it will follow that in society as a larger man these two principles must also exist, and the same relation and mutual operation be manifest ; and, since history is the "mind written large," it also must find the solution of its problems in the mutual bearing of these two fundamental forms and organs of life—the human will and understanding.

A wonderful and most interesting exhibition of the presence of mental law in human history, show-

ing how the progress of society is no haphazard succession of events, but is controlled by a law of growth as real and unerring as that which governs a plant or a single human mind, seems to me to be found in certain remarkable coincidences in the circumstances attending and preceding the two greatest epochs of the world's annals—the First and the Second Advents of the Lord. I refer to the process of the world's preparation for these two events respectively. Both events were for essentially the same end—the regeneration of society, the re-opening of a spiritual plane of life in human souls, and the inflowing and reception there of new impulses of life from above. The First Advent provided for a new birth of mankind into a heavenly life on the natural plane, a following of the Lord in child-like obedience, in heroic confession, in faithfulness unto the death of this body—the body in which He, our Master, was crucified. The Second Advent provides for a new birth of mankind into a spiritual knowledge of the Word and a spiritual following of its precepts, and so into a more interior and spiritual reception of the Lord and life in Him. To prepare the world for the Advent of the Lord meant, in both instances, to prepare the mind on a large scale, or in the sense of human society, for the descent of Divine Truth, and thereby of Divine Good, into the two great organic receptacles of life—the human intellect and the human will.

The writings of Swedenborg contain the remarkable statement that, since the fall of man and the

decadence of the successive Churches on this earth, the human will, or man's voluntary part, has become so wholly corrupt or spoiled as to be incapable of regeneration, and that the only possible salvation remaining for man will consist of the *building up of a new will in his intellectual part*. This is equivalent to saying that man cannot be regenerated immediately by and in the love of good, but that the truth and the love of truth must be first acquired, and must serve as a medium for the implanting of the higher and truly heavenly love, which is the love of good for its own sake.

In accordance with this law, in any great epoch of the world's reformation we are led to expect not any sudden breaking out of new higher impulses of good, until, at least, a preparation has first been made in the "intellectual part" of human society. The truth is ever to be the instrument by which the good effects its ends ; even as it was the Divine Word, or Truth itself, which was made flesh, that thereby God might dwell with man and effect man's redemption. But the receptacle of truth in the "intellectual part" of man, and the preparation of this intellectual part for the reception of new truth, that thereby a "new will" may afterwards be implanted, is what we may expect to find exhibited in any true and complete history of those periods which have preceded both the First and the Second Advents of the Lord into the World.

If we were asked where we might have looked

for the "intellectual part" of the human race in the time preceding the Lord's First Advent, I think we would readily agree in answering, in the Hellenic people. In the fourth century before Christ, Greece might not improperly have been called the intellect of the Grand Man upon this earth. And it is just here, in this mighty mind which sent forth from the academies and the *fora* of the Greek cities impulses of thought and imagination more powerful even than the great fleets that sailed from her harbours to conquer and to colonize distant lands—here it is that we witness a wonderful intellectual movement, such as the world nowhere else exhibited, and such as could have taken place in no other race of people then existing. It was the birth and culmination of a system of philosophy so original, so sublime in its scope, so elevated and pure, and so full of light in its higher planes, as to seem more akin to Divine revelation than to mere human invention. "Divine" we may indeed call it, in so far as we recognize in it something Divinely prophetic—something providentially given to an exceptional and high class of human intellects, to kindle anew a desire for and a love of the truth among men, and to cultivate an ability to recognize the truth, and to receive it when it should be revealed.

The broad mind of that distinguished statesman and scholar the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone has not failed to fully recognize this important fact in the mental development of the race, and has admirably described it in the following passage extracted from

an article in the *Nineteenth Century* for October 1891, entitled, *Greece and Christianity* :

"It has been the belief of the Christian Church and community that the history not only of the chosen people, but of the world throughout a very wide circle, was, before the coming of the Lord, a grand *præparatio evangelica*. In some respects the forms of the preliminary discipline were obvious enough. The conquests of Alexander secured for that marvellous instrument of thought the Greek language, such a currency as, when backed by the influence which in the West had been acquired by its literary monuments, dispensed, as it were, with the day of Pentecost, in the general action of the Christian Church, and supplied a channel of communication and a vehicle of worship available in most parts of the civilized world. What the genius of Greece was to secure in the region of thought, the vast extension of the Roman Empire effected in the world of outward fact. It prepared the way of the Lord and made the rough places plain. Immediately before and after the Advent it levelled the barriers between separated and hostile communities, and for the first time established the idea of police in its highest form, and made peaceable and safe intercourse everywhere possible among men. Everywhere it was as with us in Britain, 'When the Roman left us,' then it was that again 'the ways were filled with rapine.'

"Another stage to the comprehension of a truth of the widest reach and highest value was attained when the world began to be sensible of its debt to ancient Greece. It may well be, to us of this day, a marvel to conceive how it could have been that, down to a time when poetry and the arts had already achieved the most splendid progress, the Christian world remained insensible to the superlative dignity and value of the ancient Greek literature and art. In Italy at least, the compositions of the Greeks must all along have survived in numerous manuscripts. But the Greeks had not merely produced a

certain number, not after all a very large one, of great works of mind and hand ; they had established habits of mind and of performance alike in art, in letters, and in philosophy, such that they furnished the norm for civilized man in the ages to come. Hellenism became a capital fact for the race. Greece supplied the intellectual factor under the new dispensation of Christianity as truly as the Hebrew race supplied us with the spiritual force which was to regenerate the heart and will of man. And this was done for millions who knew but little but the name either of Greeks or Jews. And if this transcendental function was assigned to the Hellenic race outside the bounds of any continuous revelation, the question surely arises whether other races may through their power of religion or otherwise have made their special contribution to the fulfilment of the grand design for establishing the religion of the Cross, and for giving it an ascendancy which is already beyond dispute, and which may be destined even to become in the course of time, universal over the face of the earth."

The history of Greek philosophy has been called the history of the world's philosophy, as if there had been and could be no other. And this we must admit to be true, if we have regard to the great human organism which society and its history presents, and observe the distinct function allotted to each part in the grand ordering of the whole. Beginning with the comparatively gross conceptions of the elemental or physical philosophy of Thales and his followers, and ending with the sublime speculations of Socrates and Plato on morals, on the nature of the soul, on the beautiful, the true and the good, on the soul's immortality and the nature of the gods, on the truly blessed life, the perfection

of the human nature in the individual and in the model state; and, in immediate sequence, the splendid inductive philosophy of Aristotle, who, with reverence for the gods and for the supernatural, yet lifts again the study of nature into its true dignity, and so completes the ideal survey of the whole universe, spiritual and natural; such a complete intellectual growth was this whole beautiful creation of the Hellenic philosophy, that it seems more like the orderly development of a single human mind than the result of scattered fragmentary efforts of successive scholars, extending over some two hundred years. Can we fail to see here some altogether unexceptional and remarkable preparation going on under an overseeing and directing Divine providence, "in the intellectual part" of the human race?*

What may seem at first an objection to this exceptional position being assigned to the Greeks—a people entirely remote in race and religion from that people distinguished as the chosen of God and the depository of Divine revelation—will, on further examination, be found to rather corroborate than invalidate our view.

In the first place, the direct influence of Hellenic culture—embracing learning, philosophy, and the fine arts, and all the intellectual stimulus which these imply—upon the Hebrew nation and upon

* See Dean Stanley's *History of the Jewish Church*, especially the chapter on Socrates, for a very instructive survey of the relation of Hellenism to Christianity.

all the various races going to make up the Roman empire in the time of the Cæsars, is evident at a glance into the literary and political history of the three centuries preceding the Lord's First Advent. The conquests of Alexander carried the language and, in some measure, the learning of the Greeks into Egypt, to Palestine, and the far east, and gave them predominance. It was Greek learning that gave Alexandria its intellectual pre-eminence under the Ptolemies; it was to translate the Old Testament into Greek that the great college of the Seventy were assembled in that Egyptian capital; the Greek language thus became more and more the one avenue of intellectual intercourse in all the eastern world; and it was in the Greek language that the books of the New Testament were ultimately to be given to the whole race of mankind on earth.

But, together with this historical corroboration, we have the remarkable doctrine set forth in Swedenborg's writings, that in raising up a new Church or new Divine dispensation in this world, the Lord never makes use of the former or fallen church, but rather of a foreign and Gentile race, who hitherto not having known, and thus not having profaned and rejected, the Divine Truth already revealed, are in a state of comparative innocence, and so can receive and be profited by the new truth to be given to men. Taking the two doctrinal statements together—namely, that referring to the forming of the new or regenerated will in the intellectual part of

man, and this concerning the setting aside of the former Church in the introduction of a new one—does it not appear as if the Jewish people at the time of our Lord's First Advent represented the corrupted will which could not be regenerated, and whose house is therefore "left unto them desolate;" while the Hellenic race was pre-eminently the Gentile people—the people that sat for a long time in spiritual darkness, and yet upon whom more immediately and more fully than elsewhere the "great light" was to shine? The first extensive sowing of Christianity was, it will be remembered, not among the Hebrews, not among the Romans, but among the Greeks—Roman subjects it is true, but Greek in language and in culture—the people of Asia Minor, of Athens and Corinth and Alexandria. It was at Byzantium, the Greek capital of the east, that Christianity was publicly owned by the Roman emperor as the acknowledged religion of the world; and it was in this language that its great creeds were written, and its great battles carried on with the prevailing systems of pagan religion and philosophy. The whole doctrinal formulating of Christianity in creeds, apologies, sermons, apostolic epistles and rituals, was essentially Greek—done in the Greek language, and the result of centuries of Hellenic culture. In this way did the intellect of our race, as represented or actually embodied in that extraordinary people, serve as the vehicle by which the Word of the New Testament, and so the Gospel of redemption, could be given to humanity;

an intellectual instrument not itself regenerated or perfect, but providentially prepared for receiving and giving abroad the truth. This truth was an absolutely new gift to the world ; it was higher than all philosophy and than all science ; it was that of which a Roman governor asked, What is truth ? the truth as at once the discoverer and the conqueror of sin ; the truth as the Word incarnate ; the truth, not as the world-maker only—for as such had the Platonists already known it—but as the World-Redeemer, the Anointed One, the Messiah !

It was in anticipation of this truth that Socrates talked of virtue and duty, and Plato depicted the struggle of the soul between the spiritual and the sensual loves, and the true life of the philosopher as one who was governed by his knowledge of the eternal ideas. Is it not a beautiful historic coincidence that we read in the gospel of the Incarnation of the Word, that "There were certain Greeks among them that had come up to the feast, saying, We too would see Jesus" ?

THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE IN ITS RELATION TO THE LORD'S SECOND ADVENT.

ABOUT four hundred years elapsed between the highest perfection of Greek art and philosophy and the First Advent of the Lord. That length of time was necessary, we are justified in believing, for the diffusing of the intellectual spirit as well as the language of the Greeks among all those nations to whom the Gospel was first to come, and so to prepare them *intellectually* for its reception and its subsequent transmission to others. No one can doubt that parts of the fourth Gospel are in the letter couched in language as perfectly suited to a world to whom Hellenic ideas were familiar, as is the epistle to the Hebrews to the people of that name. The translation of the Old Testament into the Greek of what is known as the Septuagint, not only seems like an anticipation of a complete Bible of both Old and New Testaments in that language, but it actually became the vehicle of the translation afterwards of the Old Testament into the Latin edition known as the Vulgate, and so of the diffusion of the Word throughout the whole of western Christendom.

Another four hundred years, constituting a period of a similar preparing of mankind for another Divine advent, seems to be clearly manifest in the history of the centuries that elapsed between the beginning of the Italian Renaissance and the time of the Second Coming of the Lord ; and it is to the remarkable and interesting historical coincidences furnished by these two periods that I chiefly desire now to call attention.

The movement known as the Renaissance or the Revival of Learning had its origin chiefly in Italy, and pre-eminently among the princes, the scholars, the poets, the artists, and the monastic orders of Florence. If we begin with Dante and Boccaccio and Petrarch, the two latter of whom were important contributors to the introduction of the new learning, while the first we may call the creator of the Italian language as a literary repository, we are carried back to the latter part of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century. Thence the movement lasted to the downfall of the Florentine republic, under the later Medicean dukes, a space of about two hundred and fifty years ; during which time the Roman Empire of the east had come to its end in the capture of Constantinople by the Turks. The great religious and political revolution known as the Reformation had been going on in all Europe, and special revivals or new births of science and literature had been taking place in the leading cities of France and Germany, but especially in England during that which we call the Elizabethan

Age. Chaucer—who, although later than Dante by a lifetime, yet occupies a position so similar to the great Italian as the father of his nation's poetry, if not of its language—will serve as a convenient landmark for our fixing the beginning of that period of revival, of great intellectual activity, and of creative power, which extended for over two hundred years after his death, and embraced the times and productions of Spenser, Shakespeare, and Bacon, as well as the whole beginning, rise, struggles, and final establishment of the Protestant Church of England.

This revival of learning—a movement which extended throughout Europe, and constituted a genuine intellectual awakening of the mental life of the various nations—had, as I have said, its chief centre and source in Florence. Again was human society to enter upon a new preparation in its "intellectual part" for the reception of a new, regenerating, spiritual life. Like the era of Greek philosophy, the Italian Renaissance preceded by four hundred years the advent of the Lord in a new revelation of Divine Truth to men. In what consisted this second intellectual preparation of mankind for the reception of this truth?

First, we observe that the Renaissance was itself a revival of that same Hellenism, and even, we may say, that same Paganism, which, forming no part of the former or Jewish Church, in Athens, B.C. 400, equally formed no part of Christianity, in Florence, A.D. 1400. It was essentially an introduction, not

only of the Greek language, but of the pagan Greek literature and pagan philosophy into the learning of Latin or Western Europe. Pico della Mirandola, Petrarch, Ficino, Boccaccio, and others, seized upon the treasures of Greek pagan literature which the poor scholars, driven from the east by the inroads of the ever-advancing Turks, had brought with them to the hospitable doors of the wealthy Florentine patrons of learning, like nuggets of gold or strings of pearls washed up on the shore after the wreck of a costly merchantman. Greek learning was the fashion of the day ; Greek grammars and lexicons began to be elaborated and published ; Plato's philosophy began to be placed high above the theology of the Christian fathers ; and the Greek poets, their mythology and morals, began to either supplant—or, more frequently, transform into semblances of themselves—the religion, the superstitions, and the worship of the Church. Hostile as this pagan revival may seem at first thought to the Christianity of the time, it was not more so than the Hellenism of old to the Jews in the time of the Maccabees ; and just as the Greek language became the vehicle of the revelation of the whole Word to the non-Hebraic world, so did it now again become the vehicle of its new dissemination, through the revived study of the Word in its original forms, the translation of its multiplied texts into the various popular languages of Europe, and its publication by the now newly-invented printing-press.

Hither then to Florence, in these days of the

intellectual new birth of Europe, came the scholars of England and France and Germany. Erasmus, More, Colet, Melancthon, and Reuchlin drank alike at the pure source of the Greek texts of the New Testament here brought to light; and those draughts of new mental vigour and life were to set all Europe astir in the pursuit of a deeper and truer knowledge of the fundamental facts of Christianity. Not only began now a sifting of old traditions and dogmas in the light of the newly-found standards of revelation; but the stimulus of this new learning—or, rather, of this old learning revived, because released from the restraints of bigotry and superstition—had set minds to enquiring in every direction, and science and invention, and the various industries and arts belonging to our modern civilization, began now a course of refined development. The religious and political upheavals that accompanied the Italian Renaissance are evidences indeed of something more than any mere intellectual influence. The reformation preached by Savonarola in Florence was in many senses a far more genuinely religious movement than that of Luther and of John Knox; and while it attracted the attention of Lorenzo de Medici and the Platonists of his court, it can hardly be said to have owed anything to either Greek texts or pagan learning. The fermentations, the terrible disturbances attending the breaking up of an old and corrupted church, were beginning even then to make themselves felt in the spiritual world, and

thence in society in all its forms upon earth : but, at the same time, in the ordering of Divine Providence, while everything was becoming only more corrupt and demoralized in the voluntary and affectional part, in the intellectual part of society there was a quickened life, a process of cleansing, repairing, and putting in order ; so that in this renewed or reformed intellect of Christendom the truth to be revealed in the Lord's Second Advent might at length find a suitable abiding-place, and so help to the birth of a new will, the restoration of a living Church on earth once more. The agencies of this intellectual renewal were, as I have said, chiefly the stimulus afforded by the fresh delight of contact with pagan myth, art, poetry, and philosophy, consequent upon the introduction of Greek letters from the east ; the access this afforded also to the books of the New Testament in their original tongue ; the awakening of the critical spirit, and the sense of freedom in matters of belief ; and, finally, the translation of the Bible in various languages, and its dissemination through the printing-press. These were not only means of intellectual quickening and discipline ; but the more we examine, the more we shall find these the absolutely necessary requisites for the subsequent reception by Christendom of the truths to be revealed in the Lord's Second Advent. Swedenborg calls this great intellectual change "the coming into a freer way of thinking about spiritual things:" but this acquiring of "a freer way" is not the work

of a few years, but of hundreds of years ; although the final result—the final casting off of the broken shackles—may seem like the work of an instant in the striking of a blow.

It was the death of charity, and the ultimate separation of faith from charity, even by the force of a dogma, that constituted, says Swedenborg, the death or consummation of the First Christian Church. In Rome, its utterly corrupt fountain-head, all Catholic Christendom beheld the death of charity, the trampling under foot of the moral law, the substitution of the authority of man for that of the Decalogue and of Christ—the ever-living Word. In Germany and England the spirit of free enquiry and the protest against religious tyranny resulted in the twofold effect, on the one hand of a rationalism leading ultimately to the total unbelief or the agnosticism of to-day, on the other, of the terrible dogmas of a Trinity of Gods, and of faith in the vicarious atonement of one of these as the sole condition of human salvation. Truly the regeneration of the world required the implanting of a new will in a new intellect, totally apart from both of these corruptions of the Christian Church. Again it became necessary that a new intellect should be formed, not in the Church already corrupt, but somewhere outside of it. This new intellect was formed in the new learning—pagan in origin, and necessarily, at that day, infidel, because critical in its tendency—of which the Italian Renaissance was the chief vehicle to the nations of western Christendom.

It may be urged—and not unreasonably, I am well aware—that the parallelism is still lacking between the ancient and the more recent periods and processes of preparation for the Lord's Advent, in that, whereas the New Dispensation at the Lord's First Coming was manifestly granted to a wholly Gentile world—the old or Jewish Church proving itself unable to receive the Word in spirit, whom in the body they had crucified—on the other hand, the dispensation now given in the Lord's Second Coming is, not only as a matter of fact but of necessity, addressed to the former or the consummated Church ; inasmuch as "the Church is there where the Word is," and the invitation to all the "Seven Churches which are in Asia" to come and enter into the New Jerusalem, is expressly held by Swedenborg to be addressed, in its spiritual meaning, to all those who are in the light of the Word (*Apocalypse Revealed*, Nos. 10, 11). In what sense, then, can it be still true that the new will in the "intellectual part" of the Grand Man of the New Age is not to be witnessed in a renewal of the Old Church itself, but in the choosing of a new stock, a Gentile people, as foreign to the old or discarded Christianity as Hellenism was foreign to the Jews ?

It is in admitting fully the many difficulties attending this part of Swedenborg's teaching, that I nevertheless think I can see much helpful light thrown on the problem itself by the historical parallel I have attempted to draw.

In one sense, we must admit that the truths of

the Lord's Second Advent have been given directly and solely to the Christian Church, as to those nations of mankind "who have the Word;" since, if for no other reason, the Second Coming is nothing else but the revelation of this same Divine Word in its spiritual sense.

But, on the other hand, in what sense has the Church truly the *Word* at the present day? and how far is the "intellectual part" of mankind—in which the "new will" of the Lord's New Church is necessarily to be implanted—how far is this to be identified with the old or former Christian Church, as represented by its leading denominations or establishments as now existing?

In this connection we may well bear in mind that a Church is a Church, not through its possession of the Bible, but "according to its understanding of the Word" (*S. S.* 76). If the present Churches of Christendom, even though they possess copies of the Bible, still do not understand the Word, they have in so far ceased to be a Church in a true sense: they may still be nurseries of religion, more or less beneficial to the various sections of mankind, but still not the genuine Christian Church at all; even as we are distinctly taught that Roman Catholicism, while a religion, yet forms properly no part of the Christian Church (*Apocalypse Revealed*, no. 718). A new Church, then, will have as one of its chief conditions a new understanding of the Word. But this Word, to be newly understood, must first be possessed as a book or

Bible in all the integrity of its letter, and freed utterly from the shackles of traditional interpretation and the bias of the dogmas of the past. To provide for the new age such an absolutely free Bible seems to me the manifest Providence-leading in all the history of Christendom, from the Italian Renaissance down to the present day. The Bible has become itself, in one sense, an entirely new book; new in its literal form, as translated into the various modern languages; new in the manner of its use; new in the senses in which it is studied and understood. Even though Swedenborg gave the doctrines revealed from the internal sense of the Word in the Latin language, the home language of the old or Roman Church, still in their diffusion in the world it is rather through those languages, once wholly barbarous and pagan to the Christian capital, the English, German, French, and Scandinavian, that the doctrines of the New Church, by which alone the Word is henceforth to be understood, are made known, as well as the Divine text of the Word itself. The English and the Dutch, whom Swedenborg places in the centre of the Christian world because of their possession of the Word and their freedom of thought in religious things (*True Christian Religion*, nos. 800, 807), were possessed of neither of these qualifications, we may say, at the time of the beginning of the Renaissance. What elevated them to this high distinction was nothing but this new learning which England, pre-eminently among European nations, imbibed from the Floren-

tine schools. It was England and Geneva and Holland that gave us the new Bible in newly-authenticated texts, and in the introduction of the sacred languages of the Word into the curriculum of the schools. The Greek was thus the medium of the new learning and the new Bible, just as the Latin is the medium of Swedenborg's own communication of its doctrines alike to all the nations of the world; but neither in the Latin nor the Greek, neither to the Latin nor the Greek race, are the doctrines of the New Church given primarily, but rather to "a people of a strange language," to "barbarians and Gentiles," remote from both Rome and Constantinople and Jerusalem physically, and hardly less so in all their mental characteristics and religious instincts. And what I have endeavoured to show is that, apart from all the established forms and institutes of the Christian Church, there has been going on for the last four or five hundred years in the midst of Christendom, but distinct from all the accepted or established forms of Christian teaching, a purely intellectual training; as wholly foreign to the Church meanwhile existing as the Hellenic influence, which widened itself to almost universal prevalence, was nevertheless really foreign to the spirit and institutions of Judaism. This newly-acquired intellect, thus won by our modern Grand Man at the cost of so much hard struggle, so much doubt and despair, so much wrestling with past traditions, so much painful breaking of old attachments and going out from

the father's country—a struggle lasting through the many long years of religious warfare which the states of Europe have witnessed since the days of the Reformation—this intellectual state, so acquired, may seem only partially to meet all the conditions of that Gentile world, “remote from Christianity,” to which the new dispensation seems to be particularly promised (*Last Judgment*, no. 74). Yet, viewed in the broad light of history, it assumes more and more this character. If we remove the idea of earthly distance and think of remoteness of state, nothing could be more remote from former or even the present dogmatic Christianity than just this attitude of the free intellect of the modern civilized mind. It assumes all kinds of guises; it lives in all climes; it takes and survives on all kinds of food. One thing alone it rejects; one country it shuns; one house it never seeks—namely, that of the old Christian theology with its council-made dogmas, its falsified Bible, its irrational demands upon the human reason, its offensiveness to the sense of morality and justice. The modern human intellect—freed from the restraints of the past, equipped with the “forces of the Gentiles” (Isa. lx. 5, 11)—in its rich stores of natural knowledges and its ability to explore subjects with philosophical insight, seems to me to be the specially-prepared ground in which the seeds of the new dispensation are to be sown. It surely is not the ground of the still dogma-bound theologian of the existing Churches; nor is it the

ground of the ranting atheist and blasphemer ; nor of the proud agnostic, who is more bigoted in his no-faith than was ever a papist of olden time in his faith. The attitude of the thought of the present day—free to admit the errors, the shortcomings, the utter incapacity of the existing Churches to rebuild a living faith in the world, yet humbly distrusting even its own doubts, and steadfastly in secret turning its face to the light in prayer that it may yet see and believe—attests, to my mind, the new intellect which constitutes the Gentile land to which the truths of the New Church are sent. These are the Gentiles that shall come to that light which shines forth from the newly-opened Word at the Second Advent of the Lord (Isa. lx. 3). These are, in our own day, the Greeks who also would see Jesus (John xii. 20, 21).

THE NEW RENAISSANCE.

CENTURIES in the world's history are as years in a man's life. No man in looking back can assign to each day or to each year its own event, and the part that each has played in making up the total of his life's experience ; at most he can single out certain decisive moments and prominent events which have had a controlling influence in shaping his life's career, and these will stand as monuments marking a whole series of years—an epoch in his life history. A retrospect over the history of the world yields much the same vision. Years, decades, centuries fall at no great distance into a vast monotone of obscurity to the eye of the uncritical observer of the history of the past. It is only here and there that a great event or a great personage looms up, and brings with itself into prominence some influence that gave character to a wide group of years or centuries, which the historian thence names an age or period.

If now we examine those age-forming events and influences, we shall find them,—not as we might expect, primarily personal and heroic, but rather intellectual and spiritual. The person, the hero, the achievement is there, but only as subordinate

to a certain spiritual or intellectual inflowing from some vast resource of age-forming power, and not as originating this power from themselves. The primary spiritual quality of this mysterious power is acknowledged in the term so happily applied to it by the Germans—the *Zeit Geist*—or, as we use it, although in a less philosophical sense, the Spirit of the Times. This spirit is supreme; individuals are but its instruments, and events are but its working out into the surface of the life of humanity.

If we look back into the earliest beginnings of human traditions—the legendary and heroic periods—we, therefore, find not the histories of men but of the gods. What we see are not the petty achievements of man, but great age-dramas in which some mighty Divine agencies are revealing themselves for the warning and instruction of mankind. Thus all the primitive histories are not of nations, but of religions; not of kingdoms, but of Divine dispensations, which we may designate as vast world or race Churches. And the fact remains through all the panorama of history, from those early legendary periods till to-day, that the epoch-making changes in the world's life have been those of religion.

The history of the world resolves itself, when viewed from its inward forces, into a history of Churches. It is the Church that looms up in mysterious majesty as the great age-shaping agency in the world's growth, and the Church is but the grander man of each age—the universal soul acknowledging

certain truths of faith, and reception thereby of certain spiritual inflowings from the spiritual world.

Thus the Eden of the world's history is the Golden Age of a celestial religion, which ended in a deluge of monstrous falsity and sin. The Noatic age is a succeeding Church embracing the whole religious sense of mankind for a vast and indefinite period of years—pre-historic except as written in the spiritual development of mankind, and ending with a second great Judgment Day and Word's End—*Consummatio sæculi*—in the Dispersion of the Races at the Tower of Babel.

Eden—The Deluge—Babel!

These three vast scenes lying across the distant horizon of our earliest world's history in fields one above and beyond another, like strata of clouds in a clear deep sky at sunset, are what form the earliest life events of every race or nation whose traditions have been preserved for record. Savage and civilized races, Assyrian, Egyptian, and Hebrew, alike behold these great essentially religious forms, when their eyes turn to the past, looming dimly up, and, alone, out of the abyss of darkness taking any definite shape.

With the Hebrew Church began the authentic literal history of revealed religion, but of only that line of it which found its instrument in the Hebrew race. The externality and racial obstinacy of this people fitted them to be the depository of the monotheistic worship, and of a system of holy symbols or representations whereby certain

Divine impressions could be kept alive in the sensuous chambers of the mind of humanity, as by no other means. These same symbols, constituting the Mosaic ritual and the inspired history of the Chosen People, were at the same time wholly prophetic and spiritual in their hidden meaning, and were such as could be infilled when the time should come with the Divine Spirit, and become the instrument of making over the moral and spiritual world into a veritable kingdom of God, and of "creating Jerusalem, forever, a joy upon the earth."

Thus this Old Covenant of the ritual law and letter was in time succeeded by that grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ, not however by His destroying the law, but by His fulfilling it.

The Incarnation was the real turning-point in the world's history, from that of the involution of the Divine in the letter, and so in the Word made Flesh, to the evolution thence of a Divine life into humanity and the beginning of the reign of the Spirit.

It is surely not difficult to see how from the beginning of the historic period the development of the civilized world had for its goal and centre the Roman Empire. The implanting therein of Christianity, the diffusion thereby of the Gospel in the Greek and Latin tongues, and so the making of a new world—the inaugurating of a Fourth world-age.

I have shown in another essay how the way for

the implanting of Christianity in the world was laid in the intellectual preparation brought about by the Greek learning and philosophy which preceded the Incarnation by some four hundred years, and how a revival of Greek learning occurred in Europe in the age known as that of the Renaissance—the 14th to the 16th centuries—as if preparatory in like manner to another great day of spiritual illumination which was to be ushered in upon the world.

The Greek enlightenment which was to refine the intellectual sense of the vast rude hordes of the Roman Empire, and, like the inscription on the Cross in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, was to become the channel of revelation to the early and mediæval Empire of the KING OF THE JEWS,—the same enlightenment had now begun to make itself felt again, not only in awaking out of its superstitious stupor and blind obedience the mediæval Church, but in raising from its racial sluggishness and dreams the great rude Scandinavian savage of the north. In the Revival of Learning the great trumpet was truly sounded announcing the coming of the Son of Man, of the Day of Judgment, and of the End of the World.

Four hundred years have passed away since the discovery of America by Columbus; and that sound, as of a mighty rushing wind, has been heard through the courts and the schools and Churches, the hovels and the palaces alike, bidding the world awake and get ready, although by a still

long and toilsome and blood-marked progress, for a new advent of the Spirit, the beginning of a new historic age.

The spirit of the Revival of Learning was essentially religious, as is proved by its result, that upturning of the ecclesiastical world which we call the Reformation. Truly regarded, however, the immediate influence of that movement was almost wholly intellectual, and as such only preparatory to a much more remote religious result. The Reformation was by no means confined to religion. The severance of the Protestant sects from the Roman mother Church was but a small part of the reforming the world underwent at that time. The immediate religious change it wrought, whether in men's beliefs or morals, were not of vast importance. Morally, the Catholic Church underwent as great an improvement as did the Protestants ; while doctrinally considered, Calvinism was only the wine of Augustine turned sour.

The real change wrought in the Reformation was the intellectual one, the change in the receptivity of human minds toward new truth. It was a setting free from the traditions and superstitions and slavery of the past: the entering upon a freer way of thinking about spiritual things.

The remark has frequently been made, How slight a part of the life of humanity is written in the history of the world's kings, heroes, and wars. This is because the spirit of a time is vaster and broader than any of its several agencies taken

singly. The Greek philosophy was the message which Alexander's conquests cut the road for into all parts of the intellectual world of that date. Cæsar became the ruler of Europe in order that his successor Constantine might fasten the cross to the standards of the imperial army. The wars from the seventh to the fifteenth century, when the last sigh of the Cæsars was breathed out at Constantinople, including the conquests of the Saracens, the invasions of the Moors, the ravages of Tamerlane, the Crusades, and the final settlement of the Turks in the Palace of the first Christian Emperor, were all religious wars ; that is, they were not for the conquest of lands but of souls, for the extension and ascendancy of a religious faith. The religious idea was what filled Europe for the whole period from the Nicene Council to the downfall of Constantinople. In the awakening of the Renaissance a new spirit spoke ; not to make wars cease, but to point to a new goal, a new victory, a new redemption of the world. Liberty,—not mere civil, but intellectual and spiritual liberty—the entire release of the human spirit from bondage—this became now the aspiration of the minds that were to control the movements of the world, and everything began to shape itself to this end as if by magic. The crooked paths began to be made straight and the rough places plain. Education, the restoration of the learning of the Greeks which for ages had been obliterated, the translation of the Bible and its publication through the printing-press, the circum-

navigation of the world, the beginnings of modern physical science and the invention of labour-saving machines,—these all united as tributary influences in preparing mankind for entrance upon an entirely new stage of life.

But while religion, in its active and reactive influences, has been at the heart of all the great world-movements during the nineteen Christian centuries, yet it cannot be said to have undergone, meanwhile, in itself, any essential change since the first great change from the Church of the Apostles to the Church of the Empire. The Reformation did not so much change the traditional faith as open the way to its total rejection, and to the substitution of nationalism and the modern agnosticism in its place. The great fundamental doctrines of Augustine and Calvin, the Tripersonal Deity, the Vicarious Atonement, the Resurrection of the Material Body, and the personal Second Coming of Christ attended with a physical destruction of the universe,—these have remained practically unchanged, whether by Catholic or Protestant Councils.

But in the minds of the people there has been a vast change going on, and, as if the preparatory process exhibited by the four centuries which have elapsed since the Revival of Learning had born its intellectual fruit, the whole world of thought seems now to have assumed again a receptive and expectant attitude toward a new revelation of the Word, a new descent of a world-creative, epoch-making Spirit.

And, as in the former great critical transitions of the world, so it is now again the religious, that is the vital change. At last, after eighteen centuries, the Pauline interpretation of Christianity, based upon a lawyer's reading of the letter of the Gospel, is to give place to a revelation of the Divine Doctrine contained within the Word itself. No longer stagnant, the whole vast surface of religious thought is now being stirred; so that on the standard which the closing century holds up to our gaze as she wanders back in the long ranks of the departed ages, if there is any record the world can read more unmistakably than another, it is that which proclaims her to the future historian as the century of the making over of religion.

It is not the revision of the creeds, the "higher criticism" of the Bible, nor any movement ecclesiastical or ritualistic among the various Christian denominations, that constitutes this new age-forming movement. These are all only special and incidental phases of religious life among the organized sects of the Christian Church. But the new religious movement embraces those without as well as those within the communion of the Church, and it extends its thrilling impulse into all avenues of human life and interest of the present day. It stirs in the mind of the inventor, the artist, the writer, the musician, the scholar, and the statesman. Realistic to the most unsparing degree, it lays bare the life of society as never did a Judgment Day before. It removes concealments and conventional

hypocrisies ; it proclaims its readiness to look upon the truth. In political, in social, and moral life it lays its axe to the root of the tree. But none the less does it bring the vision of a new ideal, the delight of a new hope, the thrill of a new love to the heart of humanity. It bids man to be content no longer with the mere life in symbols and shadows, as it bids science to grovel no longer, with face down, in the mere dust of effects. It opens a fair and entrancing vision into the realms of spiritual *causes*, and of the Divine and heavenly *ends* or purposes of things. "Behold," says the spirit of this new religion, "a New Heaven and a New Earth: for the former things are passed away."

That the world is actually entering upon a new age seems to be universally acknowledged by witnesses from every grade and department of human life. New incentives are stirring men's hearts, new ideals inspire their arts, new physical achievements beckon them on to one marvellous mastery after another of the mysterious forces of the universe, until it seems as if mankind were on the verge of demonstrating, even to their natural senses, the universality of spirit as the only substance and force and the comparative non-substantiality of matter. The reaction against the blind literalism of Christian dogma in its interpretation of the Scriptures, as well as against the essential injustice and savagery of the Calvinistic scheme of atonement, have driven thoughtful and refined natures

to the extreme of rejecting altogether the idea of a written revelation and of a physical incarnation of Deity. These revolts are however more often against the perverted traditional interpretations of the Church of the past than against the sublime mysteries themselves which have been so profanely handled ; while, on the other hand, much of the pretended " higher criticism " of the Bible by those within the Churches is pursued with a far more destructive and agnostic spirit than inspires the humble and reverent seeker of God through the paths of nature's revelations to science. But both agnosticism on the one hand, and a dessicated theology on the other, stand equally witnesses to the fact that an old order of thought and motive in spiritual things is passing away, if it has not already passed away, as a vital agency in human life, and that a new religious impulse and a new religious vision is coming over the world.

Contrasting the new life, the wonderful awakening in every branch of human activity, individual, national, and international, and the general extension of human knowledge and achievement since the French Revolution, with the stagnation, corruption, and darkness into which the world seemed to be settling, and chiefly the Church, before the middle of the last century, all the historians agree in declaring that the world has passed through a mysterious and stupendous crisis, that the present century has witnessed a new Renaissance—a birth into a new life and a higher plane of activity than

the race has ever known before. While writing this article, my eye has fallen on the following utterances of a writer in the current number of the *Atlantic Monthly* in an article on "The Prometheus Unbound of Shelley : " *

"The beginning of our century witnessed the dawn of a new cosmic day. We may say in sober reverence that not since the Coming of Christ had so vital a renovating power entered human life as entered it one hundred years ago.

"The world was indeed born anew ; but this its second birth was the birth of the Spirit. . . .

"The ideal toward which the drama presses is far different from the temperate uprightness of the Greeks ; it is no less than the absolute union with the spirit of Divine Love. For the time when the *Prometheus Unbound* is written is the nineteenth Christian century, and the vision of holiness has been beheld by the world."

But it is to writers in every line of literature and to the leaders and moulders of human thought in these days, that we may look for the evidence of this new age-forming Spirit. The characteristics, universally, of this New Renaissance are : Freedom in spiritual thinking, by which is meant the disposition to look at all topics, religious and other, from the ground of rational thinking, and not from that of dogmatic tradition ; a profound reverence for the external actuality of facts and the sacredness of matter as the embodiment, somehow, of a Divine Wisdom and a beneficent purpose ; a recognition of Law as

* See *Atlantic Monthly* for July 1892.

universal and the acceptance therein, although unconsciously with many, of the sacred doctrine of the Divine Omnipresence and Providence ; a recognition of the inmost force and substance of things as being of spirit, and, therefore, of man as being essentially a spirit clothed temporarily with a material body ; the consequent recognition of the unity of art, of philosophy, and of science as existing in the unity of spirit or the unity of life in its source in a Supreme Being whose essence is Love and Wisdom, and whose operation is beneficent Use. Further, it recognizes the political equality of all men before the law and the relation of the nations of the earth as that of a vast fraternity. Its aspiration to heaven is that to a life in the spiritual world in which the Divine ideal is reached in a perfect human society—a regenerated *maximus homo* ; it conceives of heaven and hell as those abiding future conditions which are the inevitable working out of the life freely adopted by man on earth in a world which takes its objective character wholly from the subject within. It sees the moral reformatory forces of society as lying, therefore, mainly within and before all else, in that knowledge of the truth which alone makes free.

Finally, it beholds the world, nature, the earthly life, not as existing of itself or for itself as an end, but as the shadows projected from some vast and eternal reality, within which is more and more revealed to the prophetic spirit of poet, artist, and seer, and which shall stand wholly revealed to all

illuminated souls when death shall at last take the veil away.

Such are some of the characteristics of the New Renaissance. It will be seen that they are predominantly spiritual. Even under the most materialistic and negative tendencies exhibited in these days of the end of this world, this motive has been that of an intenser radicalism—a desire to strike deeper at the root of things, not for the purpose of remaining there, but of starting anew.

It is in this essentially spiritual element that the New Renaissance differs from that of the fourteenth century. That was in its spirit essentially pagan. Its ideals were objective ones; the realization of the beautiful to the senses, and the freedom of the sensual life. The spirit of the New Renaissance is Norse rather than Hellenic; it sees its ideals within, and seeks their realization in the perfection of a spiritual life as instrumental to the whole redemption of man. And so while the former caught its breath from the south, the latter spoke from the north. The prophet of the one was Dante, that of the other was Swedenborg.

It is Swedenborg alone, who, amid the vast crowd of witnesses to the fact of an entering upon a new age of the world's history, has been gifted with that prophetic vision to know the deeper and Diviner meaning of this wonderful transition, and to see that it involves not merely a change of religion in the sense of a change of the attitude of humanity towards its God and His revelation, but a change

in the revelation of God Himself to men ; that, in other words, just as the former great epochs of the world have been marked by a Coming of God to man and the execution of a great spiritual judgment in this world, so at this time we are witnessing nothing less sublime than the promised Second Advent of the Lord and the consequent crisis or Last Judgment, by which the whole intellectual and moral world is being made new and the former things are passing away. What we now are witnessing is indeed only the result, in this mundane sphere, of a general judgment already executed in the world of spirits, whereby new influences from heaven are descending into mankind, and greater capacities are being imparted to men for their human development into the true stature of a man, "which is that of an angel."

This Second Advent of the Lord is not an advent in person, in any physical or material sense, but is purely a spiritual advent in the revelation to men of the Divine Truth of the Word or written revelation by opening to man's knowledge their heretofore hidden, spiritual meaning, and at the same time by opening the eyes of a Divinely chosen messenger to the vision of the reality of the spiritual world, of heaven, the intermediate world, and hell, and so the solving of the mystery of death and the problem of the goal of human life. The world's new birth amid which we are living and which all Churches and schools and governments are recognizing, is therefore, according to Swedenborg, the realization of

the prophetic vision of the Revelation : "Behold a new heaven and a new earth,"—but it is equally a fulfilment of that which the Churches and the historians have not known or not recognized, namely, that Second Coming of the Lord without which no new earth is promised and no Holy City descends to earth from God out of heaven.

Startling as has been Swedenborg's claim to intromission into the spiritual world and an open vision of its reality and its distinct nature and life, far more stupendous is the assertion that the Word is revealed anew and the Lord's promised Second Advent accomplished in the opening of the spiritual sense of the Scriptures and the revelation of the Law of Discrete Degrees showing in what manner matter stands related to spirit, the natural to the spiritual world, and, accordingly, the natural or literal sense of Scripture to its internal and spiritual meaning. It is not theology, in its former narrow sense, that is now made new ; but here is given the foundation for a new philosophy, a new science, a new human society, a new world. This is therefore an age-forming revelation. Its power is that of a Divine *Zeit Geist*, a breath which bloweth where it listeth, and the world hears the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. So is this new birth of the Spirit which the race is now undergoing. The theology of Swedenborg, ignored alike, officially, by theologian, scientist, and hierarch, is nevertheless the heaven that is changing the face of all Christendom and preparing the way

for a universal religion in which the Lord Jesus Christ shall dwell as in "His tabernacle with men; and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them their God."

No longer separated from them in awful remoteness, but present with them in an acknowledged system of Divine Truth and of Divine and heavenly law, men shall realize the fact of the Divine presence on earth, of the spiritual within the natural, of the kingdom of God as having passed from the symbol of prophecy into practical fulfilment.

The ideal monarchy of Dante, with its Emperor and its Pope, its State and its Church executing in harmonious co-operation the will of the Divine Ruler on earth, will have given place to the spiritual realization of the Holy City descending from God out of heaven in a system of Divine doctrine revealed to man's rational apprehension out of the opened depths of the written Word, and constituting for all men the law of true human charity on earth and the gate into the eternal citizenship of the City of God above.

In this prophetic mission Swedenborg stands out, his vision sweeping the horizon of the ages, and his voice from the north telling us of the entering of mankind upon the Fifth Age of the world. The voice of the prophet is lost to men amid their wonder at beholding the fulfilment of the things foretold. Not indeed in a heaven already realized on earth; but in the working out of the Divine judgments, the discrimination and separation of

good from evil, of the real from the false, the detection of shams, the assertion of the real and the true. In this way the world is yielding its witness to the advent of Him who ever comes, at first, not to bring peace but a sword. It is "His judgments that are in all the earth," which are now rectifying the judgments of men, establishing new ideals of justice, of charity, of liberty, of beauty, of government, and of service. These ideals are the heart of the new religion out of which will grow new art, new letters, new States, and a new worth of human living.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. The Hellenic revival which followed Dante was intellectual and external, and prepared a body for the reception of the new impulses of the present. It began the making of a new earth, the filling of the valleys, the casting up a highway for the coming of God. Without the Bible translated, without the printing-press, the art of navigation, the railroad, and the material improvements of man's condition, the time for the new birth could not have come; nay, without the wars with weapons which led to the liberation of men from physical bondage, and the wars of science which led to their mental liberation. But to the new earth thus prepared, comes now the new heaven, in the descent out of the firmament of revelation of those spiritual truths which contain the long-hidden secrets of God's dealings with man, of the nature of man's spirit, and of the final destiny of human life.

Herein is the sweet essence of the new life the world is tasting ; the origin of the realism that is not material. It is this new revelation of the Divine and spiritual within the natural, that gives rise to a delight in form and its beauty, which is not the idolatrous worship of an empty image, but the recognition of the holy substance of Good in its own person of Truth and its proceeding life of Use, which is Charity. It was an inspiration of this Renaissance which enabled Goethe to fix the "fair moment" of Faust's longing not in sensual delight, not in ambitious conquests, but in the conception of a deed of unselfish sacrifice for his fellow-man. The world's new birth is in the restoration of the Holy Trine of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful to their rightful and no longer divided sway. For the beautiful is the true and the good in their effect which is charity—the Divine breath in man. Hence it is that of those angels which were of a beauty inconceivable and indescribable by man, Swedenborg relates that they were seen as "Charities in form."

FAUST IN MUSIC.

I ONCE asked Bayard Taylor, who, in his opinion, among the composers was best able to set "Faust" to music? supposing meanwhile, without knowing why, that he would answer, "Wagner;" and I felt a kind of just rebuke when, without a moment's hesitation, he replied, "Beethoven."

We are so accustomed in these days to think of Wagner as the mighty and all-sufficient interpreter of human emotion and passion, as to forget that the singular depth and strength of his portrayal is not accompanied by that breadth and calm which is necessary to a complete representation of humanity. What Wagner portrays is rather the travail-pangs attending the birth of society out of barbarism than the repose of a fixed dominion of mind and art over brute force and disorder. The triumph of the spirit, with its law and its beauty, in a firm un-deviating rule, setting bounds to the wildest storms of passion, turning evil into good, and awarding the victor's garland to every worthy contestant—this reign of a beneficent *law* finds its expression in Beethoven as in no one else.

The quick perception of this by the gifted American poet and translator led me to reflect

whether, after all, the real interpretation of Faust be not already given in Beethoven's various writings, particularly in the symphonies. It would be certainly an interesting and perhaps not unremunerative task for a mind of sufficiently broad sympathies and power of analysis to search through these great tone-tragedies for passages giving suitable expression to the several movements of the drama. The ability to do this would of course involve a very deep appreciation of the universality of both the poem and the music. It is not for a moment to be supposed that the composer had the incidents of the drama of Goethe, then, in fact, still incomplete, before his mind when writing the symphonies ; but he had in his heart, and he conveyed in those marvellous tone creations, all unheard by himself, except by the immortal spirit's ear, the movements and the action of the great drama of the ages, the life of man, the aspirations, the struggles, the defeats, and the triumphs of the human soul. I am aware, however, that this, even if it were well done, would be in large measure a thankless task, in view of a widely prevalent aversion nowadays to what is called "programme music." The conditions of success would be almost wholly subjective ones, and in the same degree uncertain and variable. And yet I am quite confident that in the "Eroica," the "Pastoral," and the "Choral" symphonies, there are easily to be found *motifs* that would instantly strike an audience of average musical intelligence as more exactly and

distinctly portraying the Faust-idea, or its particular phases, than is done in the overtures and symphonies distinctly so labelled by Wagner and his disciple Liszt.

If the Faust-idea in its broadest conception is that of a drama of humanity, or the struggles of the human soul against the limitations of the finite and imperfect, and its final triumph in its self-reconciliation to the eternal law of the All-wise and the All-loving, and its attainment in this to true freedom and to true satisfaction, then we may most reasonably expect to find all truly human music embodying in some measure this idea. Objection may be made to our attempting to read the Faust-idea in this fashion into music, just as the same objection has been made to the efforts of those scholars who would read into Goethe's own version of the Faust-legend a universal moral import. But I do not think the question primarily regards the particular moral import of either poem or music, but rather the prior fact of their truthfulness as portrayals of humanity. If they are true to human nature the moral will be already there, with or without our "reading in." The question will only be that of our ability to discover it, and the wider one's knowledge, and the deeper one's sympathy with one's human kind, the better able will one be to detect wherein the art of tone has been the true interpreter of the art of words.

Dismissing this general discussion, it is my purpose in this paper to consider in detail the respec-

tive qualities of the more important musical settings of the Faust-drama by our modern composers—namely, those of Spohr, Gounod, Berlioz, Boito, and Schumann.

Remarkable as is the fact that this drama of the ages, as the Faust-legend has been not unfitly called, should have waited until the nineteenth Christian century for its adequate literary embodiment ; not less so are the remarkable efforts in the same period to give the legend a proper musical setting. The intellectual and the emotional contents of the deeply graved story find simultaneous utterance. It is in this coincidence of artistic endeavour that a very interesting psychological phenomenon occurs, in, namely, the exhibition here afforded of the power of the musician to penetrate and seize the most subtle phases of ethical and religious emotion, and to give these due expression in his art. A comparison of these several musical settings is therefore at the same time a kind of psychological study of the several composers. The effort will be not to form any absolute judgment as to comparative excellence, but to detect, as far as we may be able, that peculiar moral and religious phase of the drama which is emphasized in each of the musical works under consideration.

I have named Spohr at the head of the list because his opera was the earliest to be produced, and also requires the briefest notice here. It is with some hesitation that I include him in the list of interpreters of the "Faust-idea," for the reason

that his librettist's idea was as remote as possible from that, at least, of Goethe, however earnestly it may have reflected some of the cruder mediæval versions of the legend. Faust, after going through a number of exploits of very doubtful valour or honour, is finally carried off triumphantly to Hell, amid the rejoicing shouts of the infernal hosts. The story reads more like the popular Don Juan of other operas, and the music is alike sensational in character, hardly anywhere acquiring the dignity of a moral import. The composition is by no means without merit musically considered, several of the soprano arias being remarkable for their brilliancy, and even to this day popular on the concert stage, and here and there a deep strong pathos, combined with sober purity of form, reminds one even of Glück. But we do not think of this music as belonging to the subjective school in which the real opera alone finds its place—a school whose art is born of an idea clearly conceived in the mind and afterwards shaping to itself a musical form as its purest and fullest manifestation. The music of Spohr's "Faust" might readily be sung to the *libretti* of many other operas of the time without any apparent lack of adaptation. It is pleasant Society-music, if we may use the term—a sort of delicious and exhilarating accompaniment to the waving of perfumed fans, the drawing on of gloves, hastily snatched glimpses of the brilliantly dressed house, and a half-suppressed murmur of gay conversation. If we could conceive of Faust as in the

modern sense a "Society man," which somehow we find it impossible to do, we might find this somewhat flippant opera more deserving of study than it at present seems to us.

With the other four compositions to which I invite attention, there is surely no lack of subjective and earnest content. It is doubtful if, except in the oratorios and sacred cantatas of the masters of sacred music, there is manifest anywhere so earnest an intent in musical writing as we find in these works—the "Faust" of Schumann and that of Gounod, the "Damnation" of Berlioz, and the "Mefistofele" of Boïto. In none, with the exception of Schumann's "Scenes," is the text precisely that of Goethe, but all derive their theme from his version of the legend, and follow his drama with sufficient nearness to enable them to be judged as by a common standard in their literary content. They differ so widely, however, in the special theme or phase of the drama chosen by each composer for musical setting, that they are rather to be regarded as constituting together one complete expression, than as so many various treatments of a single subject. The deep intellectual insight into the meaning of the drama, and the vivid realization of its successive great motives in the language of tone by those writers, are a significant indication of the real progress of the musical art. In neither of these works is the dramatic theme subordinated to the mere play of musical sounds. It is everywhere true opera in the genuine sense,

and that so lofty a theme should have found even so many worthy interpreters is a fact that lends a new dignity to the vocation of the musical composer.

Of the five composers named, two have extended their *libretti* into the Second Part of the drama, and two have ended with the First. The moral content of the Faust-idea is of course incomplete without the Second Part. We may look for the reason of this variety of choice in the peculiar moral sensibility or receptivity in the mind of the respective composer with regard to the phases which he has chosen to embody in his work. Viewed in this light our study ought to illustrate the universality of both the poem and the music to which the Faust-idea has been the common inspiration.

It is to this kind of ethico-musical analysis that I shall mainly confine my observations on the works before us. A purely musical criticism would be quite remote from my present purpose; and I humbly hope that to many readers, who would shrink from a merely technical disquisition on a musical subject, my proposed treatment of the one before us may not be wholly unattractive.

The four phases of the drama which, I believe, have found each its distinctive expression in the several works before us are the following: The Satanic or Infernal, the Pagan and Classic, the Spiritual and the Religious.

The first, I hardly need say, is that which lends its lurid and fateful hue to the music throughout of

the "Damnation de Faust," by Berlioz. Terrible as it sounds to characterize the exquisite writing of this gifted genius as infernal, I know of no other term by which to distinguish the power and the spell of his music. Not here alone, but in much else that he has written, we seem to hear the chant of the death angel, the chorus of the accursed, the sad—how sad and penetrating!—lament of the despairing and the lost. Beauty, a depth of hectic colour, a kind of feverish glow and gleam, the repose which is that of languor rather than of rest, the awful, irresistible tread of Fate—pleasure tasted on the brink of endless sorrow, the hope which is against hope—these are what pulsate beneath the weirdly beautiful tones of this saddest of musical writers. The title of the work speaks for the thorough honesty of the writer. It is not the elevation but the degradation of the human soul—the despair of humanity—before the awful doom of "him that accuses" and denies, that is here depicted in most feeling language. The triumph of Satan, the jubilant howl of evil spirits, the stifling spell of the infernal atmospheres, give a kind of undertone to all the scenes described, even those in which a certain mockery of peace, love, and happiness sheds a thin, faint gleam of warmth and light. If there is a delicious sorrow in the prelude and in Faust's soliloquy under the influence of Nature, it is not that which is born of sympathy with an infinite life, but of an anticipation of the inevitable decay and death that threatens all. It is the music of pessi-

mism and of despair. That this triumph of Mephistopheles should have proved so acceptable to the public as is evinced by the wide popularity of Berlioz's work, and also by the recent successful run of Irving's version of the play at the Lyceum, in which Satan's rôle is in every sense the leading one, must not necessarily be construed as indicating a correspondingly diabolical predilection in the public sentiment that finds its satisfaction in these portrayals. I attribute it rather to the intense *realism* of both productions, a feature that appeals more than any other to the dominant mental craving of this time, as well as to a negative cause in, namely, the failure of the general playgoing public to penetrate deeply enough into the moral of the Faust-idea as wrought out by Goethe, to know how really superficial and delusive this triumph of "the evil one" is. The discipline of temptation, the awful combat between the angel principle and the devil principle in man, is only seemingly closed by physical death or the captivity of the body. An intense conflict is to follow—a conflict lying deeper than the plane of the body's passions; a conflict among the principles that go to make up human society. The soul of the larger man is to be tried; the field of this temptation widens beyond the limitations of the Saxon race and the Christian religion; the struggling tendencies inherited from the past existence of the race must come to their conscious realization and decision here in the breast of this typical prophet and

martyr. Those who see the drama closed with the awful flight to Hell, depicted as no one but Berlioz could do it, and carry away only the vision of its lurid depths, are, however, hardly more deficient in a true apprehension of the moral scope of the legend than the majority of those good sober-minded people who object on principle to the finding of any good and wholesome moral in a play of this nature. Both classes fall far short of that conception which, in the initial germ, as well as in the completed development of the Faust-idea, is at once its redeeming element and its lasting glory. For, whether in the ancient story of Job, in which Froude has detected the substance of the legend, or in Goethe's drama, the dominant idea is undoubtedly that of an all-ruling Divine Providence, which embraces even the hells in its dominion, and whose laws include even the permission of evil that thereby greater good may come. That the dark side of the argument should have been the first to be recognized is only natural, and that hence should be drawn a theme for popular presentation, rather than from the other more subtle and deeply hidden one, whether by the musician or stage-manager, is not a matter of surprise. If we judge a work of art by the thoroughness with which its end is attained, no one will withhold the highest tribute of praise from Berlioz's most successful work. It is not alone the musical representation of passion, grief, and despair, in their deepest throes; it is the apotheosis of the inhuman, the bestial, the vile. Witness the songs

of the "Rat" and the "Flea." Was music ever put to so base a use before? And yet it is realistic art, in precisely the same sense that we apply this term to the carnal and cadaverous canvasses that occupy so large a space in the French Salon. Its hymns, as the latter record, the triumph of matter, of the flesh, and of death. Sweet and pathetic beyond all words to describe is this dying Psyche song; the wail of the human soul, as the last gleam of the noble, the tender, the beautiful in man and woman, fades from our vision.

Unlike Berlioz, Boïto, while also choosing the Satanic title for his work, writes in a more normally human spirit, and gives us a far healthier and more genial rendering of the story. His theme embraces the Second Part, and thus introduces the idea of the final redemption of Faust; but it is not this completion of the moral motive of the drama that constitutes the distinguishing trait of this composition, so much as that which is incidental to it—namely, the introduction of the Hellenic, or classic element, through the admission of the Helena episode from the Second Part. This supplies the key-note for our understanding the peculiar charm which the work of Boïto possesses throughout. It is the loveliness of Helen, the Greek passion for the beautiful as such; it is human love, neither refined by the elimination of passion nor yet seasoned with the guilty lust of sin, but rather purely natural and free. This element, while suffusing the whole work with a certain

voluptuous and sensual glamour, is yet not fraught with the seed of corruption and death. If it is sin, it is yet not the sin done in the light, but in the sleep of Nature, in which the Christian conscience is not yet awakened. It may be animal; it is not bestial. This peculiar character of the moral sentiment embodied in Boïto's music is what leads me to call it Pagan in contrast with the Saxon-Christian element which pervades the other three. The music of the revel and the dance is that of the dithyrambic chorus of the Greeks; a Dionysian sweetness and mellowness runs through the half-dreamy bars introducing the garden scene and the light-hearted play of the lovers; the mocking gallantries of Mefistofele with Marta are like the innocent pranks of the Satyr of old—the declaration of love, the pledge, the flight, all teem with the fervid passion of inexperienced youth; the unstayed current of unreflecting, unquestioning love. Even where the composer has attempted to portray the calmer, deeper emotions, as in Faust's soliloquy on his return from his walk in the fields, and in his prayer addressed to Helen as the ideal type of the beautiful, the vein of music struck is not one that reaches deeper than the senses, beautiful as these passages undoubtedly are. Three scenes in the opera do, however, deserve special notice, on account of the immense power of artistic interpretation which they exhibit. Natural and earthly as the emotions may be which they portray, they are nevertheless deep and strong, and such as awaken

a response in the human heart at all times. I refer to the wail of grief, the frenzy of despair, that is uttered in Margaret's song, "Al Mare;" to the sweet but delusive vision of the peace of unending love, in the duet, "Lontano, lontano;" and, finally, to the description of the night in Greece, which, in the whiteness of its moonlight, its clear-cut shadows, the very stars reflected in the bosom of the lake, the melancholy fragrance of summer roses in the air, is so marvellously drawn, in the duet between Helen and her attendant in the classic scene. Rarely do we find in music so exquisite an intellect as here. It is the beauty of form left unveiled, except with the merest film of a material covering. It is like a Doric frieze, standing out white, pure, and sharply defined against the purpling sky of an Attic twilight. Not more truly did Goethe bring back the Hellenic spirit to German poetry than has this Italian composer translated in this single scene the classic *modes* into the musical form of our time. The performance of this duet by Mesdames Trebelli and Nilsson I remember, as I would a veritable vision of a night in Athens.

From the "Mefistofele," let us pass now to the "Scenes from Faust" of Schumann. This alone of all the compositions before us attempts to embody in musical language the complete moral import of the "Faust" of Goethe. The scenes of course embrace the Second Part, and even include the passage in which the solution of the deep problem of human happiness is reached—in, namely, the

discovery of the law of use, of mutual service of man to man, as the highest ideal of society—the Divine destiny of man.

That the plots of Satan should have to yield to a prosaic proposition of political economy—that the charms of learning, of sensual pleasure, of intellectual beauty, of empire, should all lose their potency in the face of a scheme to redeem some waste land and provide for a comfortable home for some poor tenants—this has been a difficult point for the critics to reconcile to their ideas of æsthetic unity and harmony. It has required a profounder appreciation of human delight and human destiny than was possessed by the ordinary poetasters and their critics of the Romantic school, to gain even a glimpse of the sublime idea which the poet has thus embodied. If it was a daring thing, such as only a genuine master could have had the courage and the strength to do, must we not admire the musician who has dared even to attempt a worthy musical expression of so lofty and yet so unpopular a theme! This Schumann has done in passages of singular power and depth. In his portrayal of Faust as that human soul that struggles for the complete reconciliation of himself to the primeval beneficent order of a Divine purpose, and that consequently yearns for the sympathy of even the inanimate world of Nature as well as for the communion of an actual human brotherhood, there is a lofty reach in Schumann's music which we are able to describe by no other term than spiritual. In-

tensely human throughout, it is nevertheless thrilled all the while with emotions that come rather from the spiritual than from the sensual side of our nature. The angelic choruses are indeed strains, worthy to be heard in Heaven—mystery, infinity, the sweet but awful secrets of the intercourse of angels and men, the dreamy but joyous ecstasies of the "blessed boys," the prayers and adorations of martyrs and prophets—all these seem to be breathed into these numbers as if from some bright door ajar into the upper world. A calm and noble dignity, the repose which foretells the sure fulfilment of the Divine purposes of good, stamps the work with a distinctly ethical character in keeping with its lofty theme. We feel that to divert and amuse are functions almost too trivial for such art as this: to elevate, to purify, and ennoble the aspirations of men becomes alike the mission of the poet and the musician. I know how lame my attempts must be to define in words what I have ventured to characterize as the spiritual character of Schumann's interpretation of the drama. I can only throw myself upon a supposed sympathetic intuition of my reader in any appeal for his approval. The composer is only employing here, in a field adequate to his genius, the same deep human insight and power of expression which have characterized his other works, and which have constituted him a kind of musical prophet. A voice speaks here which is deeper than intellect; it is rather the utterance of some celestial principle in

the human soul, of a faculty that sees, and that enables congenial souls to see, what cannot be put in words. As Boïto's music was described as sensuous without the element of sin, so Schumann is human without being sensuous. In this subtle influence of the affectional part of the mind, that which arrives at perceptions and conveys them to other minds without the formal intervention of intellect, and thus awakens lofty emotions, even without the aid of words, truly the music of Schumann's "Faust" illustrates in no feeble way in what manner

"Das ewig weibliche
Zieht uns heran."

It remains for me to point out in what manner Gounod's opera holds a complementary relation to all the foregoing, and also combines in one work their several distinctive qualities. It is as the universal commingling of all these characteristics that I have called Gounod's rendering of the drama a pre-eminently religious one. For religion is the name for that emotion in the human race which makes possible the mutual approach of the lowest with the highest elements in our nature, which permits Satan to converse face to face with Deity, and equally enables the compassionate love of the Father of mankind to reach down to the uttermost depths to recall His lost child to Himself. But the religious feeling which Gounod has here painted in tones, with truly a master's touch, is that of the

Catholic Church. It has not the profoundly ethical and universal character that finds expression in Schumann, and that can comprehend a solution of Faust's destiny like that which the Second Part evolves; but for this very reason it strikes home more directly to the conscience of the masses, who see somehow in Margaret's awful punishment and death a kind of vicarious atonement for the sin of her lover, and in the angelic strains of the postlude hear the triumph of that Divine Love which can by some means, more marvellous and instantaneous than the slow process of moral combat in the penitent soul, bring about the desired heavenly transformation. The closing of the opera with the First Part was, therefore, we may say, a dramatic necessity, when the underlying motive was the portrayal of the ordinary Christian sentiment. It is this echo of a deeply interwoven consciousness of sin, of holy love profaned, of the terrors of the Judgment Day, of the compassionate mercy and the pardoning grace of God, that has given Gounod's opera its vast ascendancy over all the others in popular favour. That it is a profoundly religious work does by no means imply the absence of other characteristics, any more than the religion of the Catholic Church excludes the idea of what is sensuous, frolicsome, or even diabolical. But the triumph of Divine compassion is foretold alike in the condemnation of guilt, in the awful throes of a remorseful conscience, in the sensitive recoiling of a pure nature from the pre-

sence of the evil one, as in the last prayer of Margaret, wherein the very music she sings seems to break the prison bars and let her soul fly free to Heaven. Powerfully as Mephistopheles is depicted here, it is as a power that is rebuked, and must crouch and crawl away defeated, rather than as the real winner and victor in the struggle with the All-Father. It is life rather than death that in the end triumphs ; and if the sin is deep, it is deeply atoned for, and the end is redemption.

The absence of the Pagan or classic scenes of the drama, as well as of the Walpurgis-Nacht episode, leaves the subject to be treated to much circumscribed limits, and the local colouring given by both the poet and the composer is decidedly Saxon in its prevailing tone. The deep undertone of sadness which is heard in the scenes where strong feeling is described, even from the first note of the marvelously subjective overture, is not an unfit expression in tones of that most true analysis of the Saxon religious character which the composer's countryman, Taine, gives us in his *History of English Literature*. But, while the religious feeling is Saxon, the power and presence of the Church as described by Gounod is thoroughly Roman or Latin. Thus the religious spirit breathes in the choruses of angels and spirits in the earlier scenes : it is shown in the mystic power of the Cross used by the students in repelling Mephistopheles ; in the holy dread which Faust feels on entering Margaret's chamber, where

" . . . day by day each influence pure
Of heaven and earth her heart mature,
And fain would welcome forth, and win
To light, the angel from within."

We feel its awful presence in the curse of Valentine ; in the delirious fears, the calm, and the ecstasies of Margaret in the Prison Scene ; and, most of all, in the sublime death-struggle, in which the soul finds release and victory for herself and her beloved.

The Church, on the other hand, not only as mocked by Mephistopheles, but as introduced in her solemn offices as a factor in the drama, is purely of the Roman type. It speaks the verdicts of the irrevocable judgment of Deity, it pronounces the calm and immovable exactions of the law. Terrible and implacable as the Fates of the ancient tragedy rises before the conscience-stricken Margaret the impending sentence of her guilt. Nowhere has this feeling of the immutability of law, of the hopelessness of doom, been depicted in the body and in the form of music, more vividly than in the organ-prelude to the Cathedral Scene. Is it not almost cruelty intoned, in its steady, calm, but irresistible onward movement, undeviating, heedless, merciless ? The accusations of Satan from within find their echo from without in the awful strains of the "*Dies iræ*," the Church's great objective representation of the Divine judgment and of the just desert of sin. The majesty, the power of the Church, speak in the solemn tones of her own Gregorian chant. The imprecations, the despair of centuries of lost and

doomed lives, press down with their burden in these massive and mighty chords. In these passages from the Church's ritual the religious element of the drama becomes localized and particularized, just as the religious element itself is the particularizing of the more universal ethical spirit. We can without difficulty locate the drama of the First Part in any of the quaint münster-cities of Southern Germany, but the limits of our earth are almost too narrow to meet the demands of the wider experiences of the Second Part.

I have attempted neither an exhaustive description of these musical works, nor to form any judgment as to their comparative merits, but have adhered to my purpose of discovering the moral *motif* which distinguished each, or of which each seemed to be a more complete embodiment. I have spoken of Gounod's work as in a manner embracing the *motifs* of the others, as well as supplementing them with a distinct one of its own, because this universality is what characterizes the religious feeling itself. It would be an interesting psychological study to inquire how far the choice of these several elements as subjects for their respective treatment is the result of some prevailing disposition or aptitude of the several composers, as shown in their other works. We can hardly doubt that the musical writing of each is the response which his own artistic sense gives back on his being impressed with a certain moral import of the legend. The responses vary according to the differences in

the impressions received, and these according to the differences in the receptive organs. Such would be a bold and intrusive kind of mental analysis, a calling of these men to a kind of moral judgment pronounced by their own works; and I confess that I should hesitate in daring to apply my own method in estimating them as I have in estimating their writing; but in one case I feel that my method is fully vindicated by the writer's subsequent choice of theme—namely, in that of Gounod. Not only has the real bent of his musical genius, in spite of apparent efforts to turn it in other directions, proved itself a distinctly religious one by his virtual abandonment of secular for sacred subjects, his decided preference for oratorio over opera, ballet, and all other forms of orchestral writing, but I doubt if in all that he has written there has been at bottom a religious feeling so strong and all-pervading in its influence as in the opera of "Faust." On this, rather than on the later work so designated by the author himself, will the public judgment of the future see written the rightful title—*Opus vitæ meæ*.

THE SECRET OF WAGNER.

TO the interesting problem of the secret of Wagner's power there is an added importance, from the fact of the influence which this composer has undoubtedly exerted on a vast number of young and enthusiastic disciples the world over. It is because there is in Wagner's music a power of endurance, something which stimulates to effort and tends to self-perpetuation through the voluntary discipleship of loving and ardent votaries, that we ~~are~~ are compelled to admit that there is something real in it, something based upon truth and nature, and therefore capable of appealing to human sympathy, and of taking a real hold on the affections of men and women everywhere.

In undertaking to describe what this something is, and so to account for the strange phenomenon in the history of art of a popularity with the masses of that which tasks the highest critical powers of musical scholars, I am confident I shall not meet the views of any thorough Wagnerian ; since I am prepared neither to allow to the famous composer the exclusive credit for that which is best in his theories, nor can I accept his music as the highest outcome yet witnessed of the practical application of his theories to the musical art.

What has been, by his critics, called Wagner's grave blunder—his assuming the double function of poet and composer, which is at the same time held by his admirers to be a conspicuous merit—is in reality only the carrying out, in fuller detail, of a principle exhibited in many illustrious works by greater composers before him. All the great masters of the musical art have been poets, or their own librettists, in a large and true sense. All music is "programme music," and the programme exists in the mind of the composer whether he is intellectually conscious of it or not, before or simultaneously with, his writing. The varying abilities of the *hearers* to read the meaning of the writing, is alone what makes the artificial distinction between what is commonly recognized as programme music and what is not. All can read the unwritten libretto of the Pastoral Symphony, and of the symphonic poems of Berlioz. In his great trilogy, Wagner has only added the programme written out in full, so that what was in his mind, forming the theme of his musical work, may thereby be the more distinctly in the hearer's mind while listening.

Nor can we concede the claim of originality in what is called the musical ethics of Wagner, the place he assigns to music as nearest of all the arts to the "original idea" and the "will to live." Philosophy has always taught that there is something in life deeper than thought and lying beyond the scope of verbal utterance, and that to appeal

to this and to give this expression is the highest vocation of art. The theory elaborately clothed by Wagner in metaphysical terms is only what every lover of music can confirm from his own experience. All who know the true power of music are aware of that supreme satisfaction and sense of relief one feels in listening to a great musical work, as if the soul within had found a mode of realizing its infinite longings which no other form of art could furnish. Such music approaches indeed the "infinite idea" so far as it gives form to an infinite and ever-varying emotion, or "will to live." Wagner has not so much erred in his lofty conception of the musical art, or in his ambitious striving to attain its realization, as have those who would attribute the origin of this conception to Wagner, or hold that he alone has achieved this realization. In my own judgment, Bach, Handel, and Beethoven have more fully than Wagner himself realized the lofty scope and the peculiarly Divine power of the art of musical composition.

But if I deny to Wagner the title of musician of the future, it is because I accord to him so fully that of musician of to-day; and herein I think is to be found the answer to the whole question of his extraordinary popularity and influence. The music of Wagner has given voice to the spirit of the present age as that of no other composer has done. It is not the spirit of perfected humanity, of calm and elevated contemplation, of perfectly ad-

Justed and harmonious activities, of wholesome and enduring delight—of life, in a word, at its best ; it is rather the spirit of unrest, of doubt, of mingled despair and hope, of struggle and ambition, of pride and presumption mingled with the weak yielding of the cowardly, the ignoble and base. Our age is not the age of humanity at its best ; the affectional light that inspires it and seeks an utterance in music does not differ from that which seeks its expression in other forms of art, in the painting, the architecture, and the literature of our day. Without wishing to be pessimistic, it is difficult to convince ourselves in these days that the productions of our time in either of these directions are really great in the sense that we feel the works of the masters of other days to be. We have neither a Michael Angelo, a Leonardo, a Dante, nor a Shakespeare to point to as the eminent embodiment of the spirit of our time. Our time itself is not an ideal but an essentially materialistic time. Its distinguishing virtue, if it have any, is its realism. Its mission is that of striking at the roots of things ; and amid the blows, the cruel gashes of the axe and the crash of the falling monarchs of the past, there is little space for heeding the gentler voices of the spirits that hover in the upper air.

An age whose architectural triumphs are to be chiefly seen in Railway Stations, Stock Exchanges, and Eiffel Towers ; whose art delights chiefly in depicting the carnage of the battlefield or the dis-

secting-room, or the life of the slums or of the *demi-monde* ; whose plea of "realism" is made to cover, like a mantle, a multitude of sins in its literature more corrupting even than the grossness of its art, in what music can such an age find its own awful struggle for life depicted in tone better than in those manifold creations of real genius in which Wagner has repeated again and again the same sad and tragic tale ? It is at once a tale and a confession. The whole chaotic disorder of our time, our mental perplexities, our social and moral confusion, rolls on in its turbid, remorseless, resistless flood, through these prophetic strains of Wagner's music. We read in the libretto, indeed, of Brunhild and Siegfried ; we hear voices whispering about the music of the future. As a matter of fact, we are beholding, under whatever mediæval name or guise, only the drama of to-day, the awful struggle of its own realism with what is left of its ideal or spiritual life. To have given this spirit of degraded but struggling humanity a voice in that language, which of all forms of utterance is the most immediate language of the soul, is surely no mean service. It is something to have written even the music of Bedlam : and at a time like this—when, in a very real sense because applying to the things of mind, the world has reached its judgment day and is witnessing the "consummation of the age," the struggle of the shadows of the past with the dawning gleams of the new day—to have given prophetic voice to this state of our humanity ; to its yearnings, its despair,

to its striving and its hope of ultimate victory ; is the highest office of the musical composer, and constitutes the great and enduring merit of Richard Wagner, and the secret of his powerful hold upon the popular mind.

THE ONE AND THE MANY.

THE morning sun lies mirrored in the sea,
Whose glassy waves, heaving in noiseless swell,
Break it in many shapes. In dancing glee
The many suns their glittering falsehoods tell
To skipper's children, who, with idle gaze,
Stare down the gently rising schooner's side.
"Oh, count the little suns!" the younger says;
"See how they come and shine, and quickly
hide."
"Black suns for every shining one I see,"
The elder cries, "and dragon-shaped and queer!"
At evening, in one vast tranquillity,
The seas a fair, reflected heaven appear,
While the great sun drops calmly to his rest,
The manifold, at last, as one confessed.

GOOD FRIDAY IN ST. MUNGO'S.

THAT day our blessed Lord was crucified
I entered a cathedral vast and grey,
Whose builders with their faith have passed away.
No more by fervent worship occupied,
A deathful chill did there instead abide,
While idly gazing visitors did stray,
Forgetful all of sacred place and day ;
If but the sight were seen, well satisfied.
Only aloft the organ's plaintive tone
A player hid from vulgar gaze did wake,
And such sweet music through the arches pour
That the old shrine did tremble with a moan,
As if in that its very heart did break
In longing for its ancient prayer once more.

"ALL THAT DOTH PASS AWAY."

"Alles Vergänliche ist nur ein Gleichniss."—*Goethe.*

ALL that doth pass away is but the form
Reflected from the real that remains.
'Tis I that bear within me peace and storm,
The world with all its losses and its gains.
Even the body's shape and all its sense
Is but the mirror wherein I may scan
My inner self ; but bear the mirror hence
Or break to atoms, still remains the man.
So death may change the outer circumstance
But to reveal the real world within,
And let me see, in one astonished glance,
The vision of my virtue or my sin ;
And going hence from out this shattered shell
I carry with me my own heaven or hell.



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